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University of DURHAM
DEPARTMENT OF THEOLOGY
submitted in August, 1992

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The Ideas of
"Predestination" and "Election"
in
Pauline Thought

by
Hartmut Hilke

(The thesis is submitted for attaining the degree of: MASTER of
THEOLOGY.)



14 JAN 1994

Abstract
of
Hartmut Hilke,
"The Ideas of 'Predestination' and 'Election'
in Pauline Thought"

It is a matter of fact that Paul uses in his letters the ideas, and also the terminology of "predestination" and "election". This study tries to answer the question of how Paul used the terms which belong to this semantic-field, and where he incorporated them in his thought.

Therefore, our study is mainly an exegetical one. It interprets texts from several letters, like the texts from Rom 1,1-7; 8,28-30; 1Cor 1,20-31 etc. In a final chapter we will also interpret those texts from Rom 9-11 which contain this idea, and which use first of all the terms that belong to our theme.

However, we found the texts with the help of a concordance by looking up verbs like καλέω, or ὀρίζω, and by taking into account nouns like κλησις, and ἐκλογή.

The texts are all interpreted in a contextual verse-by-verse exegesis, and with the help of the usual methods of contemporary New Testament interpretation.

Already the way we arranged our texts in the "Table of Contents" is a first outcome and result of our exegetical work. We arranged them according to the overall-themes in which the texts appeared, that contained this terminology, which was either the context of "proem", and "prescript"; or the context of "consolation", and "exhortation"; and the problem of the believing Gentiles, and the unbelieving Jews.

Finally, on the basis of our interpretation of these texts, we attempt to gain new insight into this theological topic by relating them to the question of "ecclesiology".

The author is convinced that only a new understanding of the church will bring forth a new, and strengthened understanding of the ideas of "predestination" and "election" which can be made fruitful for our work in the church of today.

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Preface

Right from the beginning of my theological studies at Tübingen University in 1983, when Professor Hofius lectured on "Romans", I was confronted with, and became interested in the question of "predestination and election".

In the course of my further studies I repeatedly came across the theme of "predestination"; particularly in exegetical seminars. Discussions with my friends and fellow-students contributed further. But it was not just this permanent being-in-touch with this theme which made me write the thesis. It was my growing conviction that the ideas of "predestination" and "election" are of a particular importance for the theology and for the church of today.

And yet, I always had some scepticism about those who argued in philosophical and sophisticated logic on the question of "predestination" and "election". This fact, and my persistent interest in this theme were the power to submit the thesis for a first time, then to revise it, and finally to resubmit it to the University of Durham.

A second reason why I wrote the thesis is that I am a former member of the Baptist church, and that I am now a candidate for ministry in the Methodist church. These Free-churches are very often confronted with influences from a pietistic-evangelical background, and there one often lays great stress on the "personal decision for Christ, or for God". Every single believer must know his precise date of his conversion (This picture is of course a little bit exaggerated.). Then he often says: "I have found God!" But one scarcely hears that God also found this person. Therefore I am convinced that this influence of the pietistic-evangelical circles is not always a good and desirable one; and this is certainly not the one and only way for a renewal of the church.

However, I am certain that a renewal of church-life can be fostered by a re-discovery of the "ideas of predestination and election" as Paul has used them in his letters. He never developed abstract ideas. He used the nouns and verbs which expressed the idea of "election" and "predestination" in the vivid and living discussions with the addressees of his letters. When we learn from Paul how he 'employed' these ideas then a renewal of church-life as well as of the contemporary theology may be set going.

The Preface is also the place where I would like to thank all those who accompanied the 'evolution' of my thesis. There is first of all my former Durham-supervisor Dr. Andrew Chester, and later on it was Prof. James D.G. Dunn who was in contact with me.



But there are also my Tübingen-Professors like Prof. Otfried Hofius, and finally a lot of friends and fellow-students. Last but not least I would also like to thank Dr. J. Ziesler, and Dr. A.J. Wedderburn who corrected my thesis for the first time, and who gave me valuable advice for a revision.

A final word in the Preface shall be about the thesis itself. I have written this study in English, but cannot claim that it is idiomatic.

And yet, I enjoyed writing the thesis in English, primarily because I think it is a requirement of fairness to submit a thesis to an English University, and in this special case to Durham University, which is written in English.

Durham/ Holzgerlingen, August, 1992

0. Introduction

With regard to the following long exegetical parts, the introduction will be a brief one. It simply reflects on and tries to warrant the verse-by-verse exegesis of the texts.

I am of the opinion that the subject itself demands such a contextual verse-by-verse exegesis because the discussion on the ideas of "predestination and election" was very often a matter of philosophical speculation about a concept, or the attributes of God. This, however, is not sufficient and does not do justice to this subject.

We will find in our texts nouns like ἐκλογή, κλησίς, πρόθεσις; etc. and verbs or verbal-adjectives like ἐκλέγω, καλέω, ὀρίζω and κλητός etc. but these words have no absolute meaning. We cannot isolate the words from their contexts. This is very important to our thesis. All the words which have something to do with our theme will be examined in their special contexts, and in their contexts they get their special meaning and connotation.

The contextual verse-by-verse exegesis will prevent us from a word-centred exegesis; and it will adduce new results, particularly for the church-life of today. If this comes true, the correlation between an academic investigation, and the (every-day-)life of the Christian church will be set up.

Our theme, however, is a broad one, and we may ask the question whether "election" and "predestination" are the same; or whether we have to separate the idea of "predestination" from the idea of "election". I would like to ask, whether there is anybody who can really, and logically separate these two ideas. Who can draw a clear and distinct line between what is meant by "election", and what is meant by "calling", or "predestination"; and who will then isolate one idea from the other?

I do know that "election" and "predestination" differ from one another, but they belong to the same aspect of theo-logy. They all talk about God's action in our world by His Word for the benefit of man. This action establishes a communicative relationship between God and man. God "calls" the man to faith, and the man responds faithfully to this "call". Afterwards, when the relationship is established, the man will probably - by looking back to his past - regard himself as a "called man", whom God "predestined" for salvation.

All this is not a matter of philosophical thinking but of personal experience. This experience, however, is not an anthropocentric one - like e.g. I described above ("I have found God") - but a theocentric one because the man will say: "GOD has found me". This is the difference between these two ways of thinking.

Therefore, it might seem as if I had mixed up the different words and aspects. Our exegetical parts as well as our 'Final Remarks' will prove the opposite. But this observation is correct: I cannot give precise definitions because Paul did not give them either.

However, I arranged the different texts in a certain order just in order to show that all these texts are connected to a real situation in church-life. They are neither philosophical statements "on election and predestination", nor precise definitions which leave no room for interpretation.

1. The Old Testament- and Jewish Background

1.0 Introduction

It seems to be necessary for our thesis that we not only look at the Pauline texts, but also present some kind of introduction to the development of this subject in Old Testament and Jewish theology.

"Unter Prädestination wird die über den Menschen und seine Heilsteilhabe oder Heilverschlossenheit gefallene Gottesentscheidung verstanden, angesichts derer der Mensch nicht in der Lage ist, sich durch freie Willensentscheidung um sein Heil zu bemühen. ... Es gehört zu den Grundkomponenten allen religiösen Daseins, daß der Mensch sich auch insofern unter der Verfügungsgewalt seines Gottes weiß, als die Gottheit frei ist über Annahme oder Ablehnung des Kultes, des Gebetes wie aller Frömmigkeit zu entscheiden"¹.

We accept that this definition contains all the essential points which belong to a discussion about 'Predestination', and that this position will remain unchallenged if we simply keep to a discussion of 'Predestination' as such. We do find similar ideas in Islamic and Indian religions, but it is surprising enough that we do not encounter an explicit 'doctrine of Predestination' in the Old Testament².

In the Old Testament, however, we find a very developed belief in "election". This observation leads us to a first statement which is important for the whole thesis:

It is not possible to separate predestination and election³. Both features belong - as we will see - together and complement one another: the one who believes his historic call to faith (or obedience) comes to know his election, and confesses this as his predestination.

By doing this we avoid the danger of a "deterministischen Systematisierung partikularen Glaubens oder universaler Allversöhnung oder einer moralistischen Systematisierung immer möglicher Apostasie"⁴. This statement must be set right at the beginning of our investigation into the "Idea of Predestination", even as far as Old Testament- and Jewish -background are concerned. So we will try to give a brief survey of both aspects: of "Predestination", and of "Election" because "Predestination means Election"⁵.

¹ Ratschow, art. Prädestination, col. 479

² Cf. Dinkler, art. Prädestination, col. 481

³ Contra Quell/ Schrenk, art. ἐκλέγομαι κτλ., p. 180f (No. 5: "Der Verwerfungsgedanke")

⁴ Moltmann, art. Prädestination, col. 672

⁵ Moltmann, art. Prädestination, col. 670 (own translation, HHi)

We will focus our attention on some main aspects of "Predestination" and "Election". These aspects are:

1. the aspect of history;
2. the hebrew verb *בחר* in some of its contexts in connection with the meaning of the "people of God"; and
3. the significance of the "Holy Remnant".

This brief outline anticipates the context in which we will tackle our problems.

1.1 The Aspect of History

History has been defined "... as the most comprehensive horizon of Christian theology", and as an "... event so suspended in tension between promise and fulfilment that through the promise it is irreversibly pointed toward the goal of future fulfilment"⁶.

These definitions of 'history' show one extreme of its understanding, namely the extreme that man is only directed towards the future. There is only little awareness of the present, of experience of today. Everything is orientated to the future. As a result of this, man will always live in this tension between promise and fulfilment, he will always think in these two categories but very seldom does he accept the present as an important dimension.

The other extreme has already been indicated. We have to beware of slipping into a theology which is dominated by the individual experience of the present. I would like to call this kind of theology an "experience-theology". Such a theology is often very valuable and prolific for the interpretation of Old Testament-texts, and so it is correct to state that "... the God of the Old Testament is the God of experience and not of speculation"⁷. This God is first of all experienced as the One who delivered Israel from bondage in Egypt.

And yet, particularly today, it easily happens that this experience orientated image of God dominates the understanding of faith. People are urged to have certain experiences, such as an individual experience of conversion - a 'subita conversio' -, a special spiritual gift etc. The faith of those who do not have these special experiences is often counted for nothing, and the way to speculation about the existence of God is opened up wide. The last sentences should not be taken to cheapen the statement that "God is a God of experience", but they should demonstrate that too strong an emphasis on experience could also lead up the blind-alley of speculation about God⁸.

⁶Pannenberg, Redemptive Event, pp.15.18; similar Staerk, Zum Erwählungsglauben, p.1

⁷Rowley, Faith, p.48

⁸Cf. e.g. the often made statement that the enlightenment of the 19th century and the pietistic movement in Germany - to which people like

Nevertheless, Israel knew God as the One who delivered her from Egypt. This was Israel's basic experience, and later on Israel included other characteristics of God, like His election: "... and indeed, the thought of him as an electing God is vital to the teaching of both Testaments"⁹. This election, however, is sometimes simply understood as an 'election for service'¹⁰. Thus, the teleological interpretation of election seems somewhat short-sighted because it may easily (re-)develop into a utilitarian understanding of election.

However, the fact that God elects should not be denied. Moreover: this is a basic and important experience in Israel's life and history; it is the basis of Israel's being in this world; and it is regarded as Israel's dignity and honour. Israel has the task "... sich dieser Ehre würdig zu erweisen, um Bestand in der Welt zu haben. Kurz, sie (die in Dtn zu uns sprechenden Vertreter der Religion Israels) haben den Erwählungsglauben in der Tiefe des prophetischen Verständnisses von Gott und Welt als Gabe und Aufgabe für Israel praktisch gewertet"¹¹.

This last quotation shows us both dimensions of election:

there is the experience of an electing God who elects Israel as his people in the present time, and there is the future-dimension of promise and fulfilment.

1.2 בָּחַר and the 'People of God'

For a better understanding of this it might be helpful to look more closely at the verb בָּחַר and the meaning of the expression 'people of God'.

1.2.1 The verb בָּחַר

- The verb בָּחַר has got the basic meaning of "to examine" or "to choose", and we find the qal-form in various contexts, such as 'choosing a wife' (Gen 6,2), 'choosing warriors' (Ex 17,9), 'choosing officers' (Ex 18,29), 'choosing words' (Job 9,14), 'choosing gods' (Judg 10,14), or 'choosing the way' (Ps 25,12; 119,30 etc.).

- In addition to these meanings, it can also have the connotation of "to elect", or as בָּחַר מֶלֶךְ "to prefer to". Here, God is often the subject: He elects and chooses, be it 'a man' (Num 16,7), or be it 'a place as a holy place' (cf. Deut 12,5.11; 14,23.25; 15,20 etc.)¹².

Spener and A.H. Francke belong - are often regarded as very different twins.

⁹Rowley, Faith, p.68

¹⁰Cf. Rowley, Faith, p.68f; Rowley, Doctrine, pp.19.39.45 passim

¹¹Staerk, Zum Erwählungsglauben, p.1

¹²See for a fuller discussion of these texts: Bergmann/Ringgren/ Seebass, art. בָּחַר, coll.599-602

- Finally, and most important for our context, we find בחר also in connection with the "election of the people" (1Kings 3,8; Deut 14,2; 4,37; 10,15; ...). In particular Deut 7,6ff is of some importance for the rest of our thesis because it is in some way the basic text for the understanding of Israel's election.

1.2.2 Deut 7,6ff

The context of this text is that Israel is compelled by God to defeat the people of Canaan, "to utterly destroy them, to make no covenant with them, and to show them no mercy" (v2;RSV). The Israelites, however, were probably willing to come to terms with the Canaanites. This coming to terms with the Gentiles was prevented and foiled on the one hand because of its consequences - as e.g. v4: 'to serve other gods will kindle God's anger against His own people' -, and was thwarted on the other hand because Israel is a "people holy to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for his own possession, out of all the peoples that are on the face of the earth" (v6;RSV). These are the two reasons for God's prohibition of interrelations with the Canaanites¹³.

Vv7-11 explain v6 in particular, and God's freely bestowed love is the first reason of Israel's election. This affection neither depends on, nor is evoked by particular characteristics of Israel, such as strength, or great number, or military successes, but it is the "... undemonstrable mystery of the love of God for his people"¹⁴. The love of God is the basic element of Israel's election, and it is God's predominant characteristic in his relation to his people. We may paraphrase it by an election 'sola gratia'¹⁵.

'Sola gratia', however, is never "... a logical basis. It is the admission, proceeding from the strongest possible feeling, that the election is an inexplicable fact" which can only be understood "... in terms of its factuality"¹⁶. And therefore, because we can only state its factuality, the statement that God chooses and elects excludes every human pride, when we belong to the elect¹⁷.

¹³I am in favour of the textual division of BHS which has a break between v6 and v7. This seems more logical because the בחר-sentence (v6) is the final and most important reason for God's instructions. v7 resumes the thought of v6, and explains this in vv7-11. Therefore, it is reasonable either to print the text according to BHS as NIV does, or not to divide the whole text - vv1-11 - at all, as Zürcher and Luther do. The division of RSV between v5 and v6 is not very helpful.

¹⁴Seebass, art. בחר, col.605

¹⁵Dahl, Volk Gottes, p.13: "Schon das AT weiß also von einem 'sola gratia' der Erlösung".

¹⁶Quell/ Schrenk, art. ἐκλέγομαι κτλ., p.1701-21

¹⁷Cf. Anderson, People, p.16; Rowley, Doctrine, p.18

The second element in this text which corresponds to God's choice evoked by love is God's faithfulness. Because of His faithfulness to the "oath which he swore to your fathers, ... the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage" (v8;RSV). In Israel's experience of being delivered from bondage in Egypt, God's election in love and His faithfulness to His oath became evident and manifest. Nonetheless, it is God's preceding love and faithfulness that constituted Israel's liberation. It is God's free and sovereign activity, as well as His nature to bestow freely His love and faithfulness on His people.

Vv9-11, however, talk about the demanding side of election. The people of Israel are asked to keep the commandments. Yet, this is not a harsh duty but their response in love to God: to keep the commandments in love is man's active role in this covenant-relationship which is inaugurated solely on the basis of God's free activity.

So v9 added a third element to love and faithfulness: His covenant - in v9 God is the שֹׁמֵר הַבְּרִית. All elements are equally important¹⁸. In this covenant-relationship God asks of Israel to keep His commandments as their reaction to God's covenant, and as an expression of their love towards Him. "To keep the commandments" is just another phrase for "to obey God's words"; and so it is obedience in which He is served.

1.2.3 בָּחַר in a Context of Exhortation

Finally, it seems to be noteworthy that we find the terminology of election, בָּחַר, in a context which is an exhortation to Israel. God does not allow them to reach agreement with their neighbours. On the contrary: Israel must utterly destroy them, and this is one commandment which Israel has to obey, in addition to all the other "words of God". Embedded in these two demands we find the text that speaks about election, about God's "holy people" (vv6-8).

Whether we find this connection between election and exhortation again later on in other texts will become evident from our further exegetical work. In particular, this usage of election destroys every human pride or boasting for being elected.

Election characterizes the "people of God", and election is also characteristic for the idea of a "Holy Remnant" in Israel.

¹⁸Cf. Dahl, Volk Gottes, p.7: "Die beiden Partner sind aber nicht gleichwertig; JHWH ist Gott, die Israeliten sind schwache Menschen, deshalb muß er und seine Ehre die Beziehung zwischen beiden einseitig bestimmen".

1.3 The Idea of the "HOLY REMNANT" in the Old Testament and in Judaism

In spite of all efforts to protect the idea of election from the views that it is an "... unabänderlicher Besitz", this is precisely what happened during the centuries of Israel's existence. Therefore we might understand "... die prophetische Proklamation eines Restes und die Unterscheidung zwischen Israel als Nation und dem wahren Israel" as a prophetic warning to such an attitude of security and sureness¹⁹.

1.3.1 The Old Testament and the "Holy Remnant"

The text in 1Kings 19,18 is often regarded as the 'locus classicus' for this theologumenon, but we may also add texts like Is 1,8f; 28,16; and Zeph 3,12. All these texts have several ideas in common:

1.3.11 It is no longer Israel as a whole which is described as the elect people out of all the other nations. Now it is Israel as the 'faithful remnant to God'.

1.3.12 It is always God's own and entire action. He kept for Himself a few, a 'seven thousand'.

1.3.13 These texts are all to be found in a context which draws the picture of an absolutely hopeless situation:

- Elijah thinks he is the only one who is left (1Kings 19,15);
- Isaiah lives in a totally devastated country (Is 1,7a); and
- Zephaniah prophesies the destruction of all those who rebel against God (Zeph 3,11).

All these texts portray situations which are obviously without hope. In this situation, however, the prophet hears God's promise that He will preserve a remnant etc., and therefore "... lebt der Rest 'sola fide' und zugleich auch 'sola gratia', indem er auf eigene Aktivität verzichtet und JHWH alles tun läßt. Auch die Bekehrung und der Glaube des Restes ist nicht menschliche Leistung, sondern göttliche Setzung. JHWH selbst erwählt den Rest und führt auf diese Weise seine Erwählung Israels an diesem Rest zum Ziel"²⁰.

1.3.14 There is also another emphasis discernible, and this is the tone of consolation.

These promises of a remnant are God's words which tell the prophets that God is still at work, that He is still faithful to His election. Even if the outward situation appears absolutely hopeless, there is hope contrary to all appearances. God comforts the prophets with the affirmation that He has not yet given up His people.

¹⁹ The last two quotations are taken from: Dietrich/ Wright et.al., art. Erwählung, in: RGG³ vol.2, col.612

²⁰ Dahl, Volk Gottes, p.33

Therefore, this consoling promise of God aroused all the hopes of Israel: God will definitely keep a remnant, and this remnant is still "... mit Jerusalem und dem Tempel unlösbar verbunden"²¹.

These are the places where God fulfils His promises.

1.3.2 The Post-Exilic-Movements and the Idea of the "Holy Remnant"

During the period from 587 B.C. to 70 A.D.²² the 'theologumenon' of the "Holy Remnant" became a vitally important 'terminus technicus' to the eschatology of salvation²³.

In this period several movements came into being which regarded themselves as the "Holy Remnant". The most outstanding movement was the group of the PHARISEES.

The problem of the Pharisees is that there are no authentic sources of the pre-70 A.D. Pharisees. The only information of this time has come down by JOSEPHUS and the Christian Gospels. The Rabbinical texts are mostly from the second century A.D..

The Pharisees probably emerged from the Ἀσδαῖοι, the godly people of the Maccabean-time. But in contrast to the Asideans who fought together with the Maccabees against the Seleucids, the Pharisees were fighting under Hyrcanus I. at about 135 B.C. against the claims of the Hasmonaens. The Pharisees lost this war but they became very popular amongst the Jewish people. This is the picture JOSEPHUS portrays in his works, and he describes them as "... a party of philosophical politicians. ... As a party they functioned effectively for roughly the first 50 years of the first century B.C. While individuals thereafter are described as Pharisees, the group seems to end its political life as a sect with the advent of Herod"²⁴.

Afterwards the Pharisees developed into a lay-movement which recruited its members from all social groups, mainly from the groups of manual-workers. But they still remained in a passive opposition to their Roman oppressors²⁵. In religious life, however, they developed into one of the most influential groups in Israel. They regarded themselves as the 'holy people'²⁶. Probably because of their separatist behaviour they were called later on the Φαρισαῖοι.

²¹Dahl, Volk Gottes, p.34

²²Cf. for this opinion: Jeremias, *Gedanke des Heiligen Restes*, p.184

²³Cf. Dahl, Volk Gottes, p.34: "An den Rest konnten sich alle Hoffnungen Israels knüpfen. So ist der Begriff ein fester Terminus der Heilsschatologie geworden".

²⁴Neusner, *From Politics*, p.66 gives this account of the Pharisees after he has discussed Josephus' works 'The Jewish War', and 'Antiquities'.

²⁵C. Dietrich, art. 'Pharisäer', col.326

²⁶Cf. Sifra to Lev 11,14

This separation was mainly based on their strict observance of the Torah in general, and the observance of the regulations for ritual purity in particular. This observance was "... eine große zusätzliche Belastung des Alltags"²⁷.

It was also the main obstacle in the way of them having table-fellowship with anyone else except priests.

This is the picture which the second source, the Christian Gospels, presents because they portray the Pharisees as a "... table-fellowship-sect" which "laid great stress on eating with the right people, ... who obeyed the purity-laws", and who also laid stress "...on eating the right kinds of food". So "... the central traits of Pharisaism concerned observance of dietary laws". Therefore "... Pharisees furthermore ate only with other Pharisees, to be sure that the laws were appropriately observed"²⁸.

This picture is also always conveyed by the Rabbinical traditions which portray their leader HILLEL as the person who directed "... the party out of its activist, political concerns ... into more irenic and quietistic paths, ...²⁹. The turning-point for the Pharisees was when "... Herod's characteristics became clear", and "at this moment HILLEL arose to change what had been a political party into a table-fellowship-sect, not unlike other publicly harmless and politically neutral groups"³⁰.

So the Pharisees laid stress on keeping and doing the law, and by doing this they anticipated the 'Kingdom of God'. They awaited God's Kingdom by fulfilling the Torah, and in this way "...they wanted to carry out the idea of a 'holy remnant', they wanted to put in concrete forms the holy and priestly community of God. This is the matter of concern in the Pharisees' community"³¹.

Despite their bad image that has been conveyed in the Christian tradition - cf. their negative picture in the Gospels - they became the most influential and powerful Jewish group after the destruction of the Temple and the dissolution of Israel in 70 A.D.

There were also other movements like e.g. the ESSENES, or the THERAPEUTAE of EGYPT, which strongly emphasized the observance of the Torah, and therefore regarded themselves as the 'Holy Remnant'. So the motif of the 'Holy Remnant' was vital during the period of Judaism as we defined it above.

²⁷Jeremias, *Gedanke des Heiligen Restes*, p.185

²⁸The last quotations are taken from: Neusner, *From Politics*, p.80

²⁹Neusner, *From Politics*, p.91

³⁰Neusner, *From Politics*, p.92.95

³¹Jeremias, *Gedanke des Heiligen Restes*, p.186 (Translated by HHi)

These movements that separated themselves from the 'massa perditionis' were interested in the basic elements of their own religion. Therefore we could even call them a 'renewal movement', a movement which did not only separate itself from the rest of the people but went back to the roots of Israel's election: God's work in His love and covenant, and His giving of the Commandments. To obey these commandments was regarded by all of them as their holy and self-chosen duty, and for that reason we can conclude: the Pharisees and its subsidiaries were those who took seriously God's election which combined His love with His commandments. THEY WERE THE TRUE PEOPLE OF GOD!

JESUS, however - according to the account of the Synoptics -, did not foster such an exclusivity. He broke down these exclusive barriers of Torah-observance, and of obedience to the purity-laws which existed in the Pharisee-movement. He proclaimed that the "Kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel" (Mk 1,15par), and he summed up his mission by reading the words from Is 61,1.2: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord" (Lk, 4,18-21;RSV). This proclamation of Jesus went beyond the scope of the Pharisee-theology. Jesus offered God's love and salvation to those who were excluded from religious- and also from a 'normal' social life³². Jesus proclaimed and lived God's turning in love to those who needed 'mercy'. By showing God's love as well as His mercy, he gave a new quality to election.

Jesus encountered the needy: he showed them God's love and care, and by doing this he showed that it is not exclusiveness which brings forth the 'Kingdom of God' but love to those who are in need of care.

In some way Jesus's unconditional love to everyone can be regarded as some kind of election. This unconditional love - particularly when he encountered the outcasts of his society - is similar to God's election of Israel³³. So, the basis of 'election' is Jesus's love towards man. However, we do not find a clearly defined predestinarian position in the Synoptics.

Whether we find such a position in PAUL, or whether we simply find texts which contain those terms that are associated with the idea of "election", "predestination", and "Holy Remnant" - this will be the task of our further exegetical work.

³²Cf. also: Mt 11,5fpar; 9,11ff etc.

³³To this see: 1.2.2

2. "Election" and "Predestination" in the Context of 'Proem' and 'Prescript'

2.1 The Context of Proem

2.1.0 An Introduction

It is in some way Paul's habit to begin each letter with a "thanksgiving", or a "proem" for the church he is writing to, and which is often directed towards God. In these texts Paul expresses his gratitude for the existence of the church.

The "proem" is already related to the corpus of the letter. Here, the author gives thanks to God for the state of the addressees, and he often combines it with the motives of intercession and remembrance. "Im Proömium verbinden sich Persönliches und Sachliches und klingen Thema und Themen des Briefes an" (e.g. Rom 1,8-17; 1Cor 1,4-9)³⁴.

We find these "thanksgivings" - except Galatians - in many Pauline letters, and we even discover that the apostle uses the terminology of "predestination" and "election" in them, as we see in 1Thess 1,2-5.

2.1.1 1THESSALONIANS 1,2-5

2.1.1.0 Some Introductory Remarks on 1Thess

1Thess is an occasional letter which Paul sent to the young congregation of Thessalonica in the year 50/1 A.D. In this letter the apostle utters his gratefulness to God for this new church.

The "proem" extends from vv2-10, but several times in the course of the letter the thoughts of the apostle's gratitude - e.g. 2,13; 3,9³⁵ - recur.

In the very first part of the letter we also find a text which contains the word ἐκλογή, and therefore this text belongs to our theme.

The delimitation to vv2-5 is suggested by the punctuation of N.A.²⁶ where we find a full stop behind v5. V6 is clearly marked as the beginning of a new train of thought.

2.1.1.1 The Text

- 1,2 "We give thanks to God at all times,
for you all we make mention in all our prayers,
unceasingly
- 1,3 we remember your work of faith,
and your labour of love,
and your endurance of hope
in our Lord Jesus Christ
in the presence of our God and father,
- 1,4 for we know, brothers, beloved by God, your election

³⁴Vielhauer, Geschichte, p.66

³⁵vDobschütz, Thessalonicher, p.62: "Formell betrachtet ist dieser ganze Teil (i.e. 1,2-3,18), der die größere Hälfte des Briefes umfaßt, Briefeingang, indem die Danksagung sich bis auf 3,13 ausdehnt".

- 1.5 because our gospel was not only in word amongst you,
but also in power,
and in Holy Spirit,
and in full conviction,
just as you know we were amongst you for your sake".

2.1.12 The Exegesis

- v2 follows the traditional pattern of Paul's "thanksgiving to God" - εὐχαριστῶ τῷ θεῷ κτλ. -, and expresses the apostle's gratitude to God for everyone who belongs to the Thessalonian congregation. Paul assures the Thessalonians that they are never left alone: even in physical absence he brings them in his prayers before God. This is a sign of the apostolic care for the young congregation: he brings them before God, and he is grateful for them.
- v3 The apostle tells the members of the congregation what he remembers: it is their work of faith, their labour of love, their endurance of hope in the Lord Jesus Christ. All this he remembers "in the presence of our God and father"³⁶.
- v4 provides the "... ultimate ground of the thanksgiving, namely the election of the readers"³⁷. Εἰδότες is a participle that, although not strictly parallel with ποιούμενοι and μνημονεύοντες refers back to εὐχαριστοῦμεν ³⁸. There should be no doubt that εἰδότες includes Paul, and those he mentioned in the prescript (1.1). So, εἰδότες should be translated "for we know", and this knowledge is unfolded afterwards.
But he interrupts himself immediately, and addresses himself directly to the readers by calling them ἀδελφοί ³⁹. This word indicates Paul's intimate relationship to the Thessalonian Christians.
However, they are not 'only' his brothers but also ἡγαπημένοι ὑπὸ (τοῦ) θεοῦ ⁴⁰. The use of the perfect participle ἡγαπημένοι suggests "... a decisive past event as well as a continuing reality"⁴¹.

³⁶We will not give a detailed exegesis of this verse. Therefore it must be sufficient to recommend the commentaries which are listed in the bibliography.

³⁷Frame, *Thessalonians*, p.77

³⁸Cf. vDobschütz, *Thessalonicher*, p.69; similarly Rigaux, *Aux Thessaloniciens*, p.369

³⁹This expression occurs 14x in 1Thess.

⁴⁰The mss B.D.F.G.777 omit τοῦ; the mss N^x.A.C.K.P.Ψ.81.104.945.1175. 1739.1881 al read τοῦ. With the article the 'one and only God' can clearly be identified. This is, however, also possible without the article, and this reading is also the lectio brevior. So we omit the article τοῦ.

⁴¹Moore, *Thessalonians*, p.26

Both the continuing reality as well as the decisive past event correspond to τὴν ἐκλογὴν ὑμῶν.

Now we are able to understand the "election" as a Divine activity which took place before all the times, before all history⁴². Naturally this idea is not very much liked by human nature because "... it appears to exclude the possibility of man's freedom to choose or reject his religion"⁴³. But it cannot be denied that Paul talks about God's election, His pre-historical and antecedent choice, and he does it 'expressis verbis'. Yet, it is enough for Paul to have mentioned the fact that God has chosen, that He has elected, and that He has loved the people, too. So, Paul is not interested in "... tiefsinnigen Spekulationen über Gottes geheimnisvolles Walten" because his knowledge about election does not depend on complete insight into God's plan of salvation, but it represents the consequence of the historic "... Wirkungsmacht des Evangeliums"⁴⁴.

- v5 focuses on this historical realization of the election. Paul recalls the very beginning of the Thessalonian church when he started to proclaim "our good news". The ὅτι "... introduit la phrase subordonnée qui va détailler l'idée de 4"⁴⁵, and we understand it as an introduction to a causal clause. Therefore we translated ὅτι with "because": Paul wants to give reasons for the Thessalonians' election.

The main reason lies in the words "our good news was amongst you". Εὐαγγέλιον is a nomen actionis which has its equivalent in the verb εὐαγγελίζεσθαι, and so it is the apostle's preaching, his proclaiming the gospel, the good news. Τὸ εὐαγγέλιον describes the apostolic and human action which is necessary for bringing about God's election as a reality in human life. This "gospel" ἐγενήθη εἰς ὑμᾶς. Ἐγενήθη is understood best if we interpret it as a 'passivum divinum' which fits quite well into the preceding context: the basis of all is the Divine choice, God's election, and then God acts through the preaching of the gospel, and in this way "it happened", "it was"⁴⁶.

⁴²Cf. vDobschütz, Thessalonicher, p.69f: "Die Erwählung ist für Paulus immer ein übergeschichtlicher, vorzeitiger Akt, der mit der πρόθεσις, dem göttlichen Vorsatz, Röm 9,11; 8,28; dem προορίζειν der göttlichen Vorbestimmung Röm 8,28f zusammengehört als die Garantie der Heilsgewißheit; die Berufung, κληῖσις, ist davon zu unterscheiden als der geschichtliche Akt, durch den Gott seinen Heilsratschluß verwirklicht, in dem er die Gnadenbotschaft wirksam an die Erwählten herantreten und das Evangelium bei ihnen Glauben wecken läßt. ..."

⁴³Best, Thessalonians, p.71

⁴⁴See for the whole sentence: Friedrich, 1.Thessalonicher, p.213

⁴⁵Rigaux, Aux Thessaloniens, p.372

⁴⁶Friedrich, 1.Thessalonicher, p.213: "Es geschah". Mit dieser unpersönlichen Redeweise bringt er zum Ausdruck: Die Erfolge sind nicht Verdienst

A fourfold explanation describes the way it happened:

The gospel was not only effective ἐν λόγῳ, although the word is still the first and fundamental action, but also ἐν δυνάμει ⁴⁷, "in power". This can either be elucidated as the power that sins are forgiven and man is saved, or it can also mean the "signs and wonders and mighty works" (2Cor 12,12). None of these understandings should exclude the other.

With ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ, our preceding interpretation of δύναντις is supported. The Divine spirit is the 'person' who effects and brings forth both: the coming to faith which finds its expression in the acceptance of the gospel as the good news, and the wonders. God's spirit works both: it cannot be limited simply to one aspect of it.

"And in full conviction", καὶ ἐν πληροφορίᾳ πολλῇ, should be interpreted in correspondence to the preceding expressions: the Thessalonians were fully convinced by Paul's preaching they heard and by the signs and wonders they saw.

"Full conviction" seems to be a transition to the last clause of v5. This clause describes how Paul and his co-workers delivered their message: "... with full inward conviction and assurance" ⁴⁸. The missionaries - Paul and his fellow-workers - delivered their message as "fully convinced people for the sake of the Thessalonians" (οἷοι ἐγενήθημεν refers back to καὶ ἐν πληροφορίᾳ πολλῇ).

Paul stresses in this last clause that everything that happened in Thessalonica happened not for the apostle's but only for the Thessalonians' sake.

2.1.13 The Conclusion

"Election", ἐκλογή is here the assurance that it is first of all God alone who lays the foundation for the coming to faith. God in His pre-historic election is completely independent.

Yet, Paul does not speculate, he does not become lost in deep philosophical and sophisticated discussions.

On the contrary: "election" becomes manifest for him in the temporal "election" which is tied to 'place and time', and in this way it is also tied to his apostolic proclamation of the gospel.

seiner Bemühungen, sondern Gott selbst hat gehandelt ..."; and vDobschütz, Thessalonicher, p.70: "... das göttlich Aktive (...) liegt nicht in der Wortform, sondern in der ganzen Wendung".

⁴⁷The rhetorical figure οὐ μόνον ... ἀλλὰ καὶ must be understood 'climactic rather than adversative'. Cf. Holtz, 1.Thessalonicher, p.46 n.84

⁴⁸Neil, Thessalonians, p.18

So in the end: "election" is nothing other than the actual coming to faith or belief through the proclaimed gospel.

However, the apostolic proclamation is not only tied to the word, but the spectrum is much broader, as e.g. $\delta\upsilon\lambda\alpha\mu\iota\varsigma$ and $\pi\nu\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha$ indicate. Furthermore, there is still another aspect worth mentioning: Paul does not begin with "God's election" as His first action. But as v4 clearly shows, he defines God's election more precisely. The elect Christians are "brethren, beloved by God". Already this clause indicates that God is first of all a loving God, and God's love was effective when the Christians were still heathens.

So "love" and "election" belong together, they are related to one another in the closest possible way. "Election" without "love" is arbitrariness and cruelty, but "election" and "love" are real love, as we can already see in human interrelationships. And this "election in love" is for Paul a matter of thanksgiving.

2.2 The Context of the "Prescript" - ROMANS 1,1-7

2.2.0 A General Introduction

The prescript always belonged to the corpus of an ancient letter, and it consisted mostly of the elements 'superscriptio' - 'adscriptio' - 'salutatio'. The classical greek form puts the names and the greeting in one sentence: 'A to B, greeting'. The oriental-jewish formula needs two sentences: 'A is writing to B: may there be peace with you'. Paul usually takes the oriental-jewish formula, and habitually he expands the titles of writers and recipients⁴⁹.

In Romans it is the very expanded form which is striking, and it seems as if Paul tries to unfold between 'superscriptio' and 'adscriptio' some basic aspects of his theology.

Yet, there is a necessity for some introductory remarks on Paul's letter to the Romans, before we start the exegesis itself.

2.2.1 Introductory Remarks on ROMANS

In Romans 1,1-7 we find a significantly expanded address, and therefore we have to ask for the reason why Paul carries out such an expansion. There may be several answers:

- 2.2.11 Paul was a missionary who stood for a certain theology. He was not the 'undisputed theological hero' that he is often held to be. He understood the Christ-event and the faith in Christ in his own way.

⁴⁹Cf. Michel, Römer, p.63 with a lot more material. Similarly Käsemann, Römer, p.2; Althaus, Römer p.6. Contra: Cranfield, RomansI, p.46.

He preached the 'righteousness of God' as δικαιοσύνη ἐκ πίστεως, and not of works. This was his understanding and interpretation of the εὐαγγέλιον θεοῦ. Already in the prescript he began to describe his interpretation of the coming of Christ, and as a consequence of this, the Christian faith.

- 2.2.12 To Paul, the Christian church in Rome was almost unknown - although he heard about her - because he neither founded nor visited this church personally beforehand. He only had little information about them, and the problem of Rom 16 is not yet solved: there is still discussion whether this chapter is a list of greetings to church-members in Rome, or not⁵⁰.

- 2.2.13 Both sides may have heard from one another, but only by second-hand information. It is, however, Paul who intends to visit Rome with the purpose of gaining support by the Roman Christians for his missionary-labour in Spain (Rom 15,22-24). Therefore, he presents and makes known his theology by this letter.

In Romans, Paul presents his understanding of the δικαιοσύνη ἐκ πίστεως (Rom 1-8); he deals with the problem of Israel (Rom 9-11), and answers questions of a Christian life-style (Rom 12-15). In general: he tries to win the Romans primarily for his theology, but afterwards for his purposes and aims of his being the apostle to the Gentiles.

As an interesting matter of fact, Paul uses - already in the prescript - words which have to do with the "idea of election and predestination".

We will try to find an answer for his reasons of doing this in our following exegesis.

2.2.2 The Text and the Structural Analysis

- 1.1 "Paul, slave of Christ,
called apostle,
separated for God's gospel
 - 1.2 which he promised beforehand through his prophets in holy
scriptures,
 - 1.3 concerning his Son who was born of David's seed
according to the flesh,
 - 1.4 who was instituted as Son of God in power
according to the Holy Spirit
by the resurrection from the dead;
- Jesus Christ our Lord,

⁵⁰Cf. on this problem: Barrett, Romans, pp.281ff; Käsemann, Römer, pp.393ff: he interprets Rom 16 as an "Empfehlungsbrief".

- 1,5 through whom we received grace and apostleship to bring about
obedience of faith among the Gentiles for his name's sake,
1,6 among whom you also are,
those who are called by Jesus Christ,
1,7 to all who are in Rome, beloved of God,
called saints:

Grace to you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord
Jesus Christ".

The "Periode"⁵¹ of Rom 1,1-7 is a sign of an elaborate style of writing.

Paul introduces himself, using two appositions (v1a) for the description of his status and profession. A third apposition which belongs to Paul (v1b) describes at the same moment God's work, as well as the aim of his status and profession.

Afterwards he develops some fundamental conditions of Christology (v2.3a) which reach their climax in v3b.4a. These verses are the very centre of this prescript, and they work out the precise and correct meaning of this prologue⁵².

In vv4b-6 he gives a short but essential description of God's work in Jesus Christ as it concerns soteriology. The apostle's profession is connected with soteriology. He is the one who proclaims the message of salvation.

v7a is the 'adscriptio' to the church in Rome. Paul describes the Christians in Rome by using two appositions which appeared already in v1a.

v7b, the 'salutatio' is held in one independent sentence.

The structural analysis clearly shows: our "Periode" has got a real climactic structure:

- The εὐαγγέλιον has been prepared in the prophetic predictions (vv1b-3a).

- The predictions have become reality: this is the climax (v3b.4a)

- This 'Good News' of Jesus Christ works within this world (vv4b-6).

Concerning this, we may say that v1a and v7a have the function of an 'inclusio'. We might conclude: "Im Grußwort des Römerbriefes steigen die Gedanken von dem eigenen Amt empor zu dem königlichen Amt Christi und begründen von dort her die Autorität und das Recht seines Briefes an die Römer"⁵³.

2.2.3 The Exegesis

v1 As a 'civis Romanus' "Paul" uses his latin name⁵⁴. He presents his own gospel; there are no co-authors mentioned.

⁵¹Cf. BDR §464₃

⁵²Cf. Schmidt, Römer, p.16

⁵³Schmidt, Römer, p.16

⁵⁴Cf. Käsemann, Römer, p.3

Paul interprets the gospel in his way, and he takes the full responsibility for it⁵⁵.

He portrays himself as δοῦλος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ. Δοῦλος can be regarded as similar to the Old Testament-tradition of the עַבְדִּי⁵⁶ as a "... title of honour"⁵⁷.

This interpretation, however, is debatable because a slave is first of all totally dependent on his master. As a "slave" Paul does not work on his own responsibility, he is an instrument which has to work for someone else⁵⁸. And yet, Paul is not responsible to human masters, he is responsible to "Christ Jesus"⁵⁹ which is the Greek form of Jesus's messianic title. If we now regard δοῦλος in the light of this messianic title we can stress that there is also a ring of dignity in this expression. But both moments belong together in a dialectical way: he is an instrument to his master; and he is a dignified and honoured apostle⁶⁰.

Furthermore: he is κλητὸς ἀπόστολος. The verbal adjective κλητός has its Hebrew equivalent - קָרָא - in texts like Ex 31,2; 35,20; Num 1,16; Is 42,6; 49,1; 51,2. It has got the meaning of "calling to an office or a duty"⁶¹. It "... is used to denote God's gracious call to life and salvation, which is always at the same time a call to faith, obedience, service"⁶². Κλητός obviously recalls Paul's experience of conversion: he remembers the historical moment when God overcame him by His risen Son, and called him as His selected instrument.

As such a selected instrument he was sent with his gospel to the Gentiles, he became an ἀπόστολος, someone who is authorized by Christ Jesus, the Son of God. He was Christ's representative, and he was legally empowered to act on behalf of his principal⁶³.

⁵⁵Cf. Schlier, Römer, p.18; Michel, Römer, p.65

⁵⁶Cf. Wilckens, RömerI, p.61; Käsemann, Römer, p.3; Schlier, Römer, p.19; Michel, Römer, p.66; Cranfield, RomansI, p.50

⁵⁷Cranfield, RomansI, p.50

⁵⁸Cf. Barth, Römer, p.11: Paul is "... ein an Händen und Füßen gebundener Mann. ... Einer, der nicht mehr sein eigener Herr ist, sondern als Knecht einem andern gehorcht."; similarly Althaus, Römer, p.7

⁵⁹We decided to take the word-order as it is presented in N.A.²⁶.N²¹. P¹⁰.B.81.pc.a.m.vgst because it gives "... special emphasis right at the beginning of the epistle to the fact that the One, whose slave he was, was the fulfilment of God's promises and of Israel's age-old hope" (Cranfield, RomansI, p.51), and because it is also the lectio difficilior. Similarly: Käsemann, Römer, p.3; Schlier, Römer, p.19; Michel, Römer, p.66.

⁶⁰Cf. Schlier, Römer, p.19f

⁶¹Cf. Str-Bi III, p.1f

⁶²Cranfield, RomansI, p.51

⁶³This recalls the Hebrew עַבְדִּי-tradition which has been handed down by Moses, Elijah, Elisha, and Ezekiel. Cf. Michel, Römer, p.67 n.10-12

So Paul sees himself in a long tradition when he says that he is an apostle. The fact that he is also a called apostle means: he has not taken up this office on his own but he is an apostle by the designation and the will of Christ. It has been this "Offenbarungswiderfahrnis"⁶⁴ which made him an apostle.

This expression "... points away from the apostle's person to Him whose apostle he is"⁶⁵, and so we are able to say that Jesus Christ is the logical subject of the two appositions of v1a. Paul is - as "a slave" and as "a called apostle" - totally dependent on Jesus who called him, and who gave him this office. Paul cannot work on his own responsibility.

The content of his office is mentioned in the third phrase. Ἀφωρισμένος - an absolute passive participle (= 'passivum divinum'), therefore we translated it by "separated" - means: "... the divine separating to the gospel underlines the divine call of the apostle"⁶⁶. The Hebrew parallel שָׁדָד recalls Jer 1,5.; but also Lev 20,26; Is 56,3⁶⁷. So Paul sees himself in the tradition of the Old-Testament prophets and priests. He continues their tradition, as far as it concerns the understanding of his mission, his calling. He - as the 'called apostle' - is set apart, he is designated, he is consecrated and sanctified by God to a holy task, but he is not only separated from uncleanness. Therefore, ἀφωρισμένος, does not allude to his past as a Pharisee⁶⁸. God's calling has been a totally new calling to him, and in this calling he was set apart (cf. Gal 1,15f).

Paul was set apart εἰς εὐαγγέλιον θεοῦ. This is his purpose: to proclaim "God's gospel". Θεοῦ is understood as "Genitiv des Urhebers"⁶⁹, i.e.: God is the author, the initiator of the gospel to which Paul is elected.

Εὐαγγέλιον, however, can be regarded as God's Good News, and we find some texts about this "good news" already in the Old Testament, mainly in Isaiah (40,9f; 52,7; 61,1f). Especially in Isaiah "... it (and particularly the cognate verb) points to the coming of God whose saving righteousness will bring deliverance to his people"⁷⁰.

and Str-Bi III, pp.2-4.

⁶⁴Wilckens, RömerI, p.62

⁶⁵Cranfield, RomansI, p.52

⁶⁶Schmidt, art. ὀρίζω κτλ., p.455₂₋₅

⁶⁷Cf. Str-Bi III, p.4

⁶⁸Cf. Cranfield, RomansI, p.53f; Käsemann, Römer, p.4; Wilckens, RömerI, p.63

⁶⁹BDR § 163₂

⁷⁰Barrett, Romans, p.17

But Paul's Good News was even more: he was no longer the prophet of a coming Good News; he was already the preacher of a realized "good news". And to this task - εἰς shows the aim; i.e. to proclaim the gospel - he was set apart.

So we are able to draw an interim-result: Paul who is separated and consecrated - although this marks a prophetic tradition - is more than any prophet because he has to preach and spread the good news of God's salvation: the messianic hope has become reality⁷¹.

- v2 The following relative clause gives now a further explanation of this εὐαγγέλιον θεοῦ. God has 'promised (it) beforehand through his prophets in holy scriptures'. This means: "... auf dem Boden der lebendig gewordenen Geschichte steht, der hier redet"⁷². Proclaiming this fulfilled gospel of the messianic time to Jews and Gentiles appears to Paul like a new event. In general, Paul understands the Old Testament as a promise to the salvation of Christ, and he proclaims this new message which was not unexpected. Particularly the prophets awaited and foresaw this act of preaching to the Gentiles⁷³.

- v3f After the formal definition in v2 Paul defines in a phrase typical of him whom the gospel is all about. He proclaims the gospel about "the Son of God", and this v3a seems to be the connecting link between v2 and v3b.4a.

The phrases v3b.4a are the climax of this address. The two lines which are formulated in an antithetical 'parallelismus membrorum' are a traditional confession of primitive Christianity⁷⁴. This confession deals on the one hand with Jesus's human descent - i.e. "... in the realm denoted by the word flesh (humanity), he was truly a descendant of David"⁷⁵ -, and on the other hand with Jesus's Divine reality - "Similarly, 'in the sphere of the Holy Spirit' does not introduce a truer evaluation of Jesus' person, but a second evaluation true in another (divine) sphere"⁷⁶.

⁷¹Cf. Michel, Römer, p.68: "... Aussonderung von Gott ist also zunächst Zuordnung zum Evangelium. Zuordnung zum Evangelium heißt aber Zuordnung zu Gott".

⁷²Barth, Römer, p.12f

⁷³See the prophetic texts: Is 49,1ff; 2,2ff; and for the whole idea:

Althaus, Römer, p.7; similarly: Käsemann, Römer, p.7

⁷⁴See for a fuller discussion the commentaries of Käsemann, Althaus, Michel, Schlier, Wilckens; and especially Wengst, Christologische Formeln. He worked on Bultmann's statement (ThNT, p.52) that the title 'Son of David' which is conferred to Jesus in Rom 1,3 is formulated in a way which "... sich offenbar an ein ihm überlieferte Formel anlehnt; er will sich dadurch der ihm fremden Gemeinde als Apostel, der die rechte Lehre vertritt, ausweisen".

⁷⁵Barrett, Romans, p.18

The textcritical problem of προορισθέντος is a theologically motivated alteration. This reading must be rejected because v3b.4a talks about Jesus's human descent and his enthronement in the heavenly realms. This formula describes the "... Verständnis Jesu 'vom Menschen her' und 'von Gott her'"⁷⁷.

Paul might have used this traditional confession in order to show his 'orthodoxy', in order to demonstrate that he is able to adopt traditional patterns and to present them with slight corrections as his own.

The fact that he quotes this confession already in the prescript indicates how seriously Paul took this letter, and how he tried to show the orthodoxy of his theology right from the beginning.

From this vantage point we also gain a better understanding of v3a. With "concerning his Son" Paul precorrected the formula. For Paul, Jesus is the preexistent Son of God, already in his incarnation.

Incarnation and enthronement of the Son of God have had the effect that we are now able to call him "our Lord". This clause can be regarded as some sort of 'inclusio' to v3a, and then both phrases form a kind of bracket which embrace the traditional formula.

- v5 Jesus Christ who has just been described as a true man, is also a true God who gave "grace and apostleship to bring about obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for his name's sake" to Paul. Christ is the mediator of the gifts Paul received.

For that reason we may say that God is not only the One who called him - made him κλητὸς ἀπόστολος - and set him apart, but also the One who equips Paul for his service with the necessary gifts and charisms.

- v6 Ἐν οἷς ἐστε καὶ ὑμεῖς κλητοὶ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ: the Roman Christians live in the midst of the Gentiles but they are already Christians. Paul describes them with the same attribute as he used to introduce himself in v1a.

They are also - as the apostle himself - "called people", κλητοί, and elected by God. Apostle and congregation have thus the same basis for their belief and the same root, namely God's grace, God's election. Like Paul himself (v1) they are God's slaves; He is their Lord (v4). "And he and they stand in this relationship to God not because they have chosen it but because they have been called to it by God himself, just as Paul, against his own inclination and will, was called to be an apostle"⁷⁸.

⁷⁶Barrett, Romans, p.18

⁷⁷Michel, Römer, p.74f

⁷⁸Barrett, Romans, p.22

But by doing this, the apostle wants to attract attention: he believes that those who have got the same foundation will be able to understand his following ideas and arguments, i.e. Paul's own theology.

- v7a Now Paul addresses himself directly to the congregation in Rome: "to all who are in Rome" sounds as if Paul wants to direct his letter to every Roman inhabitant.

But he corrects this interpretation immediately when he qualifies it with two appositions: "beloved of God", ἀγαπητοῖς θεοῦ, and "called saints", κλητοῖς ἁγίοις. Both descriptions belong closely together because those who are loved by God become at the same moment God's called and purified saints, and vice versa.

Of course, the Christians are not able to do this on their own because the origin of salvation is never in man himself but always totally in God alone⁷⁹. It is God who calls them, who sets them apart from the world, and takes them as his property. These are the people to whom Paul writes.

He finishes the very expanded prescript with the 'salutatio' in v7b.

2.2.4 The Résumé

Rom 1,1-7 is a very unusual prescript. Paul inserted important and weighty theological thoughts. It may be that this was necessary because he knew from his own experiences that he was a controversial theologian, and that his theology was often disputed.

As a proof for his orthodoxy he quoted this traditional formula of the primitive Christianity (v3b.4a).

The terminology of election, however, is used by him to indicate right from the beginning that both partners - the apostle and the Roman Christians (!) - have the same basis of existence. Both of them owe their lives as Christians to God who called them with His holy call, and in this laid claim on them.

God "set the apostle apart" for the service and the labour of proclaiming the εὐαγγέλιον, and we interpreted this passivum divinum in terms of holiness (see above).

The Roman Christians are "called saints", κλητοὶ ἅγιοι, who are "called in Jesus Christ" (v6), but they are at the same time the "beloved of God". So Paul creates a strong, or even the strongest possible connection between him and the Christians in Rome. As a result we might even say that in the end it is God in His acting, and calling, and creating within this world who is the unbreakable link between Paul and Rome.

⁷⁹Cf. Kuss, RömerI, p.10; Schmidt, Römer, p.21

Another observation which gives support to these ideas may be added. Up to v4a Paul does not use any personal pronoun, and this can only be interpreted as God's action, i.e. God is always the One who takes the initiative, either in Paul's separation to the Gospel or in the prophetic promises. The incarnation and the appointment of His pre-existent Son (v3a) are also only God's work (see the passive participles in v3b.4a).

We can say that Paul speaks in vv1b-4a about the basic and fundamental facts of God's initiative for the salvation of mankind, i.e. Christology. No man is involved in this action.

On the other hand, in vv4b-6, Paul gives a description of his office and task, namely to proclaim, to preach the gospel to all Gentiles. So he styles himself as being involved in God's work, and we are able to establish that he now talks about the basic ideas of Soteriology (cf. the use of the personal pronouns!). This salvation of mankind must be preached, therefore: apostles and preachers are necessary.

The elements 'superscriptio' and 'adscriptio' have the function of an 'inclusio'. The statements of election - κλητὸς ἀπόστολος and κλητοὶ ἅγιοι - form the frame of this prescript because God's calling and election put both on the 'same level'. Now they are both able to understand each other and to communicate with each other. The definition as κλητός - κλητοί shows that both have had the same basic experience, and the same background. They owe their present status only to God's choice, His calling and election.

3. "Election" and "Predestination" in the Context of a 'Consolation'

3.0 Introduction

The consolation was certainly an important genre of the early Christian writings. We find it, e.g. in John 13,31-17,21 in several texts: it is the Holy Spirit who will come as the "Counsellor", who will - this is his task - comfort the persecuted and disheartened Christians. Particularly one passage - John 15,18-27 - presents a remarkable list of constituent elements: there is the hatred of the world which brings persecution; there is the Spirit who brings consolation; and there is the word of Jesus which tells them that he "chose them out of the world" (15,18ff). In John, the terminology of "election" and "predestination" is used as the basis for a consolation.

Rom 8,28-30 is a text where we also find the idea of election connected with a consolation.

3.1 ROMANS 8,28-30

3.11 The Context of Rom 8

Before we begin with the actual exegesis of our text, we will have a short glance at the context. In Rom 8 Paul gives a picture of the 'new life' of someone who belongs to Christ.

He describes this new life - which has been worked out only through God (v3f) - in a dualistic style, in which the main contrast is formed by the antithesis *κατὰ σάρκα* - *κατὰ πνεῦμα*.

However, this new life has also a great future hope because the Christians are "fellow heirs with Christ". But they also suffer with him.

Συμπάσχομεν is the keyword, and forms a bridge to the following expositions. The vv18-27 deal with both: the Christian sufferings in the present time, and the Christian hope for the coming glory.

Now, the vv28-30 are put into the argument. They refer directly to the theme of 'suffering' as we will see in v28, but they also sum up that this new life is a reality (v29f).

So we can say that the vv28-30 have two functions:

3.11.1 the function of consolation for the Christians in their present sufferings; and

3.11.2 the function of confirmation that their salvation is real.

This text seems to be like a 'breathing-space' which finally leads to the solemn and hymnic conclusion in vv31-39.

3.12 The Text and its Structure

This text is often regarded as one of the most important texts for Paul's understanding of predestination. We translate it as follows:

- 8,28 "But we know that
 all things cooperate for good to those who love God,
 to those who are called according to the decree (of God).
 8,29 Because:
 those whom he foreknew, he also predestined
 to be conformed to the image of his Son,
 in order that he might be the first-born among many brothers;
 8,30 but those whom he predestined, these he also called;
 and those whom he called, these he also justified;
 but those whom he justified, these he also glorified".

On the basis of our contextual analysis we analyse the structure of this text as follows:

In v28 Paul gives a statement which seemed to be well-known and generally recognized as true in Early Christianity. The introductory-phrase indicates this. But the statement τοῖς κατὰ πρόθεσιν κλητοῖς οὖσιν modifies immediately the first part of this sentence, the phrase τοῖς ἀγαπῶσιν κτλ. Their structure is parallel.

To prove this statement, the apostle uses a sorites which consists of five links. This sorites forms a climax, i.e. the following link intensifies the preceding one⁸⁰. It is evident that the phrase συμμόρφους τῆς εἰκόνης τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ ... ἐν πολλοῖς ἀδελφοῖς interrupts the sorites, and therefore breaks its structure.

So we may suppose that this phrase - v29b.c - is an expansion by Paul which is meant as a definition of προώρισεν.

3.13 The Exegesis

v28 When Paul begins his consolation with οἶδαμεν δὲ ὅτι he shows that he is quoting something well-known to the Christians in Rome. The correct translation of οἶδαμεν κτλ. is "but we know that"; yet, it would be even more assertive if we translated it with "we do know that". What Paul makes known to the Roman congregation is an "established confession"⁸¹.

The following statement is a matter of common knowledge. It can also be described as a piece "... of christian *gnosis*, i.e. convictions about the status of Christians in relation to Christ and to the end of the age"⁸². It consists in the sentence τοῖς ἀγαπῶσιν τὸν θεὸν πάντα συνεργεῖ εἰς ἀγαθόν⁸³.

⁸⁰BDR § 494

⁸¹Cf. Schmidt, Römer, p.151: "... ein feststehendes Bekenntnis ..."

⁸²Grayston, Doctrine, p.576

⁸³ Our quotation shows that we have decided to follow the text of *ordines* N.A.²⁰. R.C.D.F.G.Ψ. 77. latt. sy. bo. C. This is the '*lectio brevior*' and also the '*lectio difficilior*'. The other readings can be interpreted as "... eine erbauliche Korrektur" (Käsemann, Römer, p.235).

This statement of "christian gnosis" does not tend - as we perceive it in Rabbinic texts later on⁸⁴ - to some kind of calculated optimism such as: "everything has to bring out something good for the person who is affected by something bad". This kind of evolutionary optimism is not intended in our text. It is very important that Paul modified this sentence immediately in a second clause.

"Those who are called according to the decree (of God)" is this modification⁸⁵ which is logically prior to the first phrase both by its factuality, and by its chronology. The love of man towards God is preceded by God's calling according to His will.

God is the One who called man to become a Christian. He called man to faith. They are called people because God follows - in free will - His decree. Then, when God has called man to belong to Him it will be the case that man comes to love God. So man has no merits by himself, and his love towards God is a kind of response towards His calling. Christian existence is - as it is described by "those who love God" - a responding existence. The human love towards God ensues from His love which found its expression in His calling, His election, His decree and His grace towards man.

Everything - even the sufferings - will co-operate for good because man is sheltered in God's hands. This being sheltered in Him is the substantiation for this traditional Christian knowledge, and so the logical - yet not grammatical (This is πάντα.) - subject for σὺνεργῆν is God⁸⁶. Εἰς ἄγαθόν can be interpreted as 'promoting the salvation'⁸⁷.

When we draw the conclusion of v28 we may say that those who love God are no longer dependent on each other or their own decisions, but they are "... unter einem 'absoluten Dekret' Gottes, unter einer Beschlußfassung und Wendung, die nicht irgendwo diesseits ... zustande gekommen ist, sondern hinter ihnen steht als ihr ewiger, himmlischer, jenseitiger, göttlicher Lebensgrund, der im Christus gelegt ist".

Cranfield, Romans I, p.425-427 presents a longer discussion on this problem, and comes to the same result.

Similarly: Michel, Römer, p.275: "Daß die kürzere LA bevorzugt werden muß, ist sicher".

⁸⁴Cf. e.g. the rich material in Str-Bi III, p.255-6

⁸⁵Calvin, Romans, p.315: "This clause seems to have been added as a modification, ..."

⁸⁶Schlier, Römer, p.270: "Denn auf alle Fälle ist der Sache nach Gott als der zum Guten Wirkende gedacht, und zwar in allen Dingen, auch im Leiden ..."

⁸⁷Cf. Calvin, Romans, p.315: "... for God trains up the faithful by afflictions, and thereby promotes their salvation ..."

Because of this "... postulieren wir nicht, sondern wissen, daß denen, die Gott lieben alle Dinge zum Besten dienen müssen. Im Christus ist uns dieses letzte Wissen geschenkt. ... In unserem Sein im Christus liegt unmittelbar unsere Prädestination zum Heil, ..."88.

- v29 This first train of thought - where Paul expressed by means of a traditional Christian teaching that 'God brings everything together for good' - is followed by a second one which supports the first argument.

Therefore ὅτι is translated with "because": it introduces on the one hand a direct speech⁸⁹, and on the other hand it is a causal subordinating conjunction⁹⁰ which introduces, as some kind of a substantiation⁹¹, a traditional⁹² formula, namely a fivefold chain. This so-called CATENA AUREA - 'the golden chain' - is interrupted in v29b.c.

"Those whom he foreknew", οὓς προέγνω, is the first link of this chain. It says that God's eternal election took place before the world was created (cf. Eph 1,4), and it must be understood as "... not to make a statement about pre-temporal eternity; but to assert with maximum force and brevity that God's choice is prior to any action or merit of ours"⁹³. God foreknew those who love Him, and so His foreknowing is an electing and creative love. This act is the basic, fundamental act of God's election and predestination.

But those people who are 'foreknown' in God's thoughts are also 'predestined', foreordained', προώρισεν. God's predestination to salvation has become - as we will see afterwards - man's destiny before he could raise a finger or utter a cry.

- v29b.c The aim of 'predestination' finds its expression in the two following clauses. The Christian's destiny is "to be conformed to the image of His Son" "in gloria et claritate sicut et in passione et ignominia"⁹⁴. It is the aim of every Christian as the one who is foreordained and foreknown by God, to become σύμμορφος τῆς εἰκόνος of God's Son.

⁸⁸Barth, Römer, p.345f

⁸⁹BDR § 470

⁹⁰Cf. BDR §456,1; Bauer, Wörterbuch, col.1168,3

⁹¹Cf. Schmidt, Römer, p.151: "Die Verse 29-30 begründen die Heilsgewißheit noch fester durch die genauere Entfaltung des in τοῖς κατὰ πρόθεσιν κλητοῖς οὖσιν liegenden Gedankens".

⁹²Cf. Käsemann, Römer, p.235; Grayston, Doctrine, p.578; von der Osten-Sacken, Römer 8, p.68f

⁹³Grayston, Doctrine, p.583

⁹⁴Luther, Vorlesung, p.83₁₃. The translation is found in Luther, Lectures, p.75: "... in glory and brilliance, just as also in suffering and shame"

But what do *σύμμορφος* and *εἰκὼν* mean?

Σύμμορφος appears twice in Paul: in our text, and in Phil 3,21 where Paul says that Jesus Christ "will change our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power which enables him even to subject all things to himself" (RSV). The point in Phil 3,21 is that *σύμμορφος* means a future transformation. The bodies of men will be transformed through Christ into bodies which are similar to His body.

Εἰκὼν appears in 1Cor 15,49b; 2Cor 3,18; 4,4; and can be understood in these verses as the image, the likeness of the highly exalted Son of God. If Paul speaks of 'God's image' the he is thinking of Christology which signals the transformation of humanity⁹⁵.

From this point of view we can understand the second clause (v29c): "in order that he might be the first-born among many brothers".

In Rabbinic tradition the term *πρωτότοκος* got the connotation the "most loved", the "most worthy". These attributes were transmitted e.g. to the Torah, to Adam, to Jacob and Israel, and to the Messiah. V29c shows that God's purpose in foreordaining "... was in order that His only-begotten Son might not be alone in enjoying the privileges of sonship, but might be the Head of a multitude of brothers, of the company of those who in, and through Him have been made sons of God"⁹⁶.

God adopted those whom He foreknew and predestined as His sons. But nevertheless Jesus Christ is always the 'first-born' Son of these many brothers. God did not have to adopt Him. He was Son of God right from the very beginning (cf. Rom 1,3a).

The Christians, however, will form the great number of sisters and brothers. Resuming v29b.c - the part which breaks the sorites - we perceive that this sentence is a perfect example of how closely Christology and Soteriology are related to one another in Paul's thinking: Christ himself is the archetype of the 'new' man; He is the second Adam, and the first-born of God's new creation. What Christ is already now in his heavenly glory that is the final destination of each person who belongs to God's elect people. Christ's Sonship, and his 'imago Dei', his glory shall be granted to all Christians.

⁹⁵Cf. Michel, Römer, p.277: "Wenn Paulus vom 'Bild Gottes' redet, dann denkt er an eine Christologie, die den Menschen unter das Zeichen der Verwandlung stellt".

⁹⁶Cranfield, Romans I, p.432

But there is also a close connection between Christology and Theo-logy because "... als Urbild des neuen Menschen ist Christus das Bild Gottes. Auch in diesem Gedanken drückt sich der Christozentrismus der paulinischen Anschauungen von der Heilsgeschichte aus. ... Der Mensch kommt dadurch, daß er dem Urbild des Gottessohnes gleichgestaltet wird, zu seiner Gottesebenbildlichkeit"⁹⁷.

Regarding this final statement, it seems as if the apostle was forced by his own theological convictions to interrupt the sorites, particularly to give a more precise definition of what he understands by 'predestination', i.e. to announce the aim of God's predestination which is to Paul first of all his Christology.

- v30 The third link - ἐκάλειν - indicates that "... we are in the realm of historical time"⁹⁸. It is evident that ἐκάλειν must be seen in relation to κλητοί in v28c and 1,6f.

If we understand God's calling the way the Israelites do, then "to call" is an "act of creation by word" (cf. Gen 1,3,6.etc.). This creation means that God acts in favour of mankind in world and history, i.e. He realizes His eternal decree in human life.

When God calls man effectually then He "justifies" him at the same moment. Again we have the possibility to discern how Paul is fixed on Christology when he argues theologically because ἐδικαίωσεν reminds us of Paul's central theological idea, the δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ which is the "... divine gift of a status of righteousness before God"⁹⁹.

The fifth link - ἐδόξασεν - brings the 'golden chain' to its climax. He, God, has glorified us. This is in some ways difficult to understand because the aorist usually describes an event which has happened - begun and finished - in the past.

The Christian δόξα however, is an event that belongs to the future, to the Christian hope. So, why did Paul use the aorist? He used it because "... their glorification has already been foreordained by God (cf. v29), the divine decision has been taken, though its working out has not been consummated"¹⁰⁰, and "... our hope may be justly compared to a present possession"¹⁰¹.

In the glorification God fulfils His plan: as an effect of the Holy Spirit it began already but it will come to completion at Christ's Day.

⁹⁷Schmidt, Römer, p.151-2

⁹⁸Cranfield, Romans I, p.432

⁹⁹Cranfield, Romans I, p.433

¹⁰⁰Cranfield, Romans I, p.433

¹⁰¹Calvin, Romans, p.320

"Der Nachdruck liegt nun aber darauf, daß alle diese Akte unzerreißbar aneinanderhängen. Ein Glied der Kette greift sicher in das andere. Nichts, keine Macht kann dazwischentreten. Sind wir berufen, so ist unser Leben von dem göttlichen Plan umfaßt und kann ihm nicht mehr entfallen. Paulus darf des letzten Aktes, der Verherrlichung so gewiß sein, daß er auch schon von ihm schon als von etwas Geschehenem in der Zeitform der Vergangenheit sprechen kann"¹⁰².

The same people who are still suffering in their present lives know themselves - before God - as those who are already glorified. All this is a substantiation for v28.

3.2 The Conclusion

If we look back on Rom 8,28-30 we have to take into consideration that this text is often regarded as the 'locus classicus', and as the basic text for the "doctrine of predestination".

But what did Paul want to achieve by means of these remarks?

- 3.21 First of all we have to pay attention to the context. Immediately before Paul started to quote this piece of "christian gnosis", he was talking about the sufferings of those who believe. So our text functions as a consolation.

Paul's purpose of sharing these ideas with the Roman Christians is that of comfort. Those who trust in God, who love Him, are also those whom God has called and chosen according to His eternal decree: the fact that Paul is speaking in these terms to the Christians assures them that they belong to God. God is the One who takes care of those whom He loves, and who in response love Him. God shelters them. But love of man - which finds its expression in the belief in their salvation - towards God, and man's election by God belong very closely together.

If the Christians bear this in mind, then even their sufferings "co-operate for good" because God is the One who works through them for the good of man. This is the goal of Paul's first assertive and assured argument.

- 3.22 The second train of thought is the CATENA AUREA. The elements of this sorites begin in God's knowing and destination in all eternity with the aim that these foreknown and foreordained people are "conformed to the image of His Son".

Then the eternal election becomes reality in world and history by God's calling and justification which puts man into the sphere of salvation.

¹⁰²Althaus, Römer, p.95

The climax is the glorification in which we take part because God decided even our glorification beforehand.

So the ends of this 'golden chain' stretch out from eternity to eternity. They begin with God's eternal acts in which He had adjudged those who belong to Him, and whom He then determined to salvation, and they end in God's eternal glorification.

- 3.23 If we now ask for the 'kind of predestination' Paul is presenting in our text, we have to say that Paul does not speculate on God's absolute free will in the way it often happened during the periods of Church History.

He does not give a sophisticated, intellectual presentation about the 'doctrine of God's election or predestination'.

The apostle addresses himself to people whom God has already elected (cf. Rom 1,6f), and his whole concentration is focused on their present situation. The Christians, God's elect people, suffer. They do not know how to pray. They perceive that the whole creation and every creature is longing for salvation (8,18-27). But directly before this he said that the Christians will be glorified together with Christ (8,17: *συνδοξασθῶμεν*).

And so, Paul tries to explain how sufferings and glorification belong together; he wants to demonstrate that through all their sorrows, griefs, sufferings and pains God is working for the benefit of His elect people who love Him. Those "who love Him" - and this is the great comfort - are those whom God shelters in His eternal will, so that no evil can draw them away from Him.

This certainty leads over to the final, hymnic conclusion in 8,31-39, which reminds us of Rom 5,3-5.

- 3.24 So the ideas of predestination have to serve for the confirmation and assurance to the Christians that they will not fall out of God's protection. This awareness enables the Christians to bear, to stand, to endure the sufferings, and then it will be the Christian's task to praise this God.

Appropriately we may then conclude the exegesis on Rom 8,28-30 by quoting that "... Predestination is the most comfortable of all Christian doctrines, if men will accept it in its biblical form, and not attempt to pry into it with questions which it does not set out to answer. It is not 'a quantitative limitation of God's action, but its qualitative definition', the final statement of the truth that justification, and, in the end, salvation also, are by grace alone, and through faith alone"

4. "Election" and "Predestination" in the Context of an EXHORTATION

4.0 Introduction

What we have already said about the relationship of "election" and "predestination" in the context of the "consolation", is in nearly the same way valid and important for the relationship of "predestination" and "election" in the context of an "exhortation".

As we will see, Paul often uses the ideas of "election" and "predestination" in the context of an exhortation. This idea is sometimes the basis for all his admonitions, and might be rooted in the fact that Paul mainly had to deal with, and to respond to problems in 'his' congregations. But it might be even more founded on the fact that "God's calling" played an important role in his theology on the one hand, and that this "calling by God" made man responsible for his actions before God.

It is this human responsibility which Paul is referring to. What Paul is often saying is this: "It is God's calling which converted you from pagans to Christians. This calling is a holy one. Therefore: it is your task as a called and elect people to live up to these Divine standards!"

The texts are taken from 1Cor 1.2.7, and from Phil 3.

4.1 1CORINTHIANS 1,20-31

4.10 An Introduction

Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians is an occasional letter which deals mainly with problems that occurred in this congregation: He answers questions, and gives guidance in difficult situations (cf. 7,1.25; 8,1; 12,1; 16,1.12). Therefore this letter conveys to us the impression of real communication between Paul and the Corinthian church. It shows us how Paul responds theologically to questions which have been asked by the Christians of Corinth.

The traditional elements of an ancient letter - prescript and proem - are followed in 1,10-4,21 by a first discussion of the very actual problem: it is the problem of *σχίσματα* which troubled the Corinthian church¹⁰⁴.

The preaching of Christian missionaries - like e.g. Apollos (1,12) - created some factions within the congregation because it has made known to them different kinds of wisdom (cf. 1,13f). To these 'wisdoms' Paul opposes his preaching as *οὐκ ἐν σοφίᾳ λόγου* (1,17).

¹⁰⁴Cf. Dinkler, art. Korintherbriefe, col.19; Barrett, 1Corinthians, p.28

It is the proclamation of "the word of the cross" (1,18)¹⁰⁵ which is a "power and wisdom of god" (v24.31). Paul is convinced that this "word of the cross" can never be the basis for internal divisions. The only possible division is that which is created by the preaching of the gospel, and then the people are divided into those who will be saved, οἱ σωζόμενοι, and those whose will perish, οἱ ἀπολλυμένοι. A split within the congregation is, according to the λόγος τοῦ σταυροῦ, impossible. This division, however, between "being saved" and "perishing" "... is God's act (not mere sufferance)"¹⁰⁶. The quotation from Is 29,14 which focusses only on the second group supports v18¹⁰⁷.

v18f already contain the key-words for Paul's further discussion: σοφός, σοφία, and μωρός, μωρία. He uses them dialectically¹⁰⁸.

4.11 The Text and its Structure

Paul continues his argument with:

1,20 "Where is the wise?

Where is the scribe?

Where is the debater of this age?

Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?

1,21 For since, in the wisdom of God,

the world did not recognize God by wisdom,

God was pleased to save those who believe through the foolishness of preaching.

1,22 Since Jews demand signs,
and Greeks request wisdom,

1,23 but we preach Christ as the crucified,
to Jews a scandal,
to Gentiles foolishness,

1,24 but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks,
Christ the power of God, and God's wisdom;

1,25 for the foolishness of God is wiser than men,
and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

1,26 For consider your calling, brothers,
for there are not many wise according to the flesh,
not many powerful,
not many high-born,

¹⁰⁵Cf. Dinkler, art. Korintherbriefe, col.19

¹⁰⁶Conzelmann, 1Corinthians, p.42 n.17

¹⁰⁷Paul has probably used the so-called "Stichwortexegese": ἀπολλυμένοι, and ἀπολῶ have got the same root: ἀπόλλυμι.

¹⁰⁸Although it would be worthwhile to examine Paul's usage of μωρία and σοφία (Cf. Wilckens, Weisheit und Torheit), we only pay attention to this topic as far as it is helpful for our understanding of this text.

1,27 but the foolish in the world,

God has chosen, to put to shame the wise;
and the weak in the world,

God has chosen, to put to shame the strong,
1,28 and the insignificant, and the despised,

God has chosen,
those that do not exist

to nullify the things that (actually) exist,
1,29 in order that no one will boast before God.

1,30 You are from God in Jesus Christ,
who has become a source of wisdom from God for us,
(our) righteousness and holiness and redemption,

1,31 in order that, as it is written:

"he who boasts, let him boast in the Lord."

Already in our translation we have divided this text into two sections: the first from v20-25, the second from v26-31. Still, both parts are closely connected, in particular by the terminology of "election". The following exegesis attempts to show this relationship.

4.12 The Exegesis

v20 Following v18f Paul continues with four questions in the "diatribe"-style¹⁰⁹.

The first question - ποῦ σοφός; - seems to be occasioned by the scriptural argument of v19. "Scribe" and "debater" intensify σοφός. This is demanded by rhetorical style.

The words σοφός, γραμματεὺς, and συζητητὴς τοῦ αἵωνος τούτου cannot be restricted simply to Jewish Christians¹¹⁰ because this would presuppose that the church in Corinth is a homogeneous group of Jewish-Christians. Already the context indicates that this is not the case. Paul addresses himself to JEWS and GREEKS, to rich and poor people, to slaves and free (cf. e.g. 1,26-29; 7,17-23)¹¹¹.

¹⁰⁹Cf. Ruef, Corinth, p.12: "... a typical example of a rhetorical device probably borrowed from the diatribe". Similarly: Allo, Aux Corinthiens, p.15: "Les interrogatives ποῦ ... ποῦ sont du style de la diatribe".

¹¹⁰Contra: Schlatter, Paulus, p.85: "An die Träger des griechischen Wissens erinnert hier kein Wort". He interprets σοφός as סוֹפֵר, γραμματεὺς as סוֹפֵר, and συζητητὴς as שוֹרֵר. Similarly: Calvin, Corinthians, p.81.

¹¹¹In addition to this see Theißen's sociological investigations; e.g.: Theißen, Soziale Schichtung, p.232: "... innere soziale Schichtung ...: Einigen tonangebenden Gemeindegliedern aus der Oberschicht steht die große Zahl von Christen aus den unteren Schichten gegenüber. Diese innere Schichtung ist nicht zufällig, sondern hat strukturelle Gründe. Die soziale Zusammensetzung der korinthischen Gemeinde dürfte daher für die hellenistischen Gemeinden überhaupt charakteristisch sein". Cf also: Theißen, Die Starken und die Schwachen.

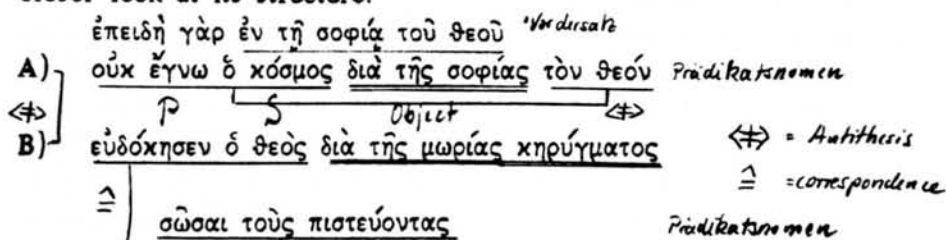
The four questions are directed towards a Christian congregation of Jews and Greeks, and every listener to this letter would have heard them in the context of his own socio-cultural background: he heard them either as a Jew, or as a Greek¹¹². Paul has asked the gathered Corinthian church about the numbers of the "wise people", and "scribes", and "debaters" - i.e. the "searchers after the wisdom of this age" -, and wants to know whether they are many. But the answer of the church-members would have been: "there are not many!"

The last question - οὐχὶ ἐμώρπεν ὁ θεὸς τὴν σοφίαν τοῦ κόσμου; - is the climax of this series of questions, and it bears the full emphasis. The answer is, without doubt: "yes, God has made foolish the wisdom of the world".

It has to be stressed that it is an act of God, that it is by His active coming into this world that "the wisdom of the world" has become foolish!

v21 This provocative statement is justified immediately.

It might support our understanding of this verse if we have a closer look at its structure:



Ἐπειδὴ is a causal conjunction¹¹³, and begins the "Vordersatz" to which the two other clauses are related. A) is the negative statement, and B) is the positive counterpart. The "Vordersatz" is a 'brachylogy', the verb is missing, and the two antithetical clauses are subordinated to it. The preposition ἐν + dative must be interpreted in its local meaning¹¹⁴, and this indicates that everything is contained "in God's wisdom".

¹¹²Cf. e.g. the possible explanation by: Wilckens, Weisheit und Torheit, p.28: v22 indicates that συζητητής must be understood in the Greek sense: "Dann aber ist V.20 so zu verstehen, daß Paulus in V.20a den Begriff σοφία durch zwei weitere Begriffe entfaltet, von denen der eine die jüdische Theologie und der andere die griechische Philosophie bezeichnet, um von daher in V.20b die Weisheit als σοφία τοῦ κόσμου zu bezeichnen. Er hat also in seiner Polemik bewußt eine 'Weisheit' vor Augen, die - wenn auch Juden und Griechen in verschiedener Gestalt - dennoch der ganzen Welt, allen Menschen eignet".

¹¹³BDR § 456; Wilckens, Weisheit und Torheit, p.29 n.1

¹¹⁴Conzelmann, 1Corinthians, p.45: "... in spatial terms"

On the one hand it is the fact that "the world did not recognize God"; and on the other hand that "God was pleased to save those who believe through the foolishness of preaching"¹¹⁵.

It is concealed in God's wisdom that the world was not able to come to a knowledge of God by its own wisdom. "The word of the cross": worldly wisdom will never discern it as God's action. The Divine wisdom in its hiddenness and foolishness is the absolute opposite to the wisdom of the world.

But it is also concealed in God's wisdom that "he was pleased" by the foolishness of preaching to save those who believe. Here, "the Divine wisdom" and "the foolishness of preaching" correspond to each other.

The worldly wisdom failed to know God. However, God revealed Himself in a way that does not correspond to worldly wisdom: it is the foolishness of preaching in which God revealed Himself, and also His salvation.

Both ways of knowledge of God still exist: the way of the world, and the way of God. They exist side by side, but only the κήρυγμα, the act of preaching "... sauve les hommes, mais a la condition ... de la croire"¹¹⁶. This is also the main condition for a unified church, for a church without schisms (cf. v12f): the faith in the λόγος τοῦ σταυροῦ. This is God's wisdom which appears foolish to human, worldly wisdom, but because it is Divine wisdom it is also Divine power for those who believe the message. These believers are saved.

- v22 Those, however, who do not believe in this foolish Divine power, "demand signs", or "request wisdom".

Here, the apostle describes the two main kinds of ancient religious attitude. Each of them is intended to arrive at a certain knowledge of God by sticking to its principles.

Ἐπειδὴ, a causal conjunction (cf. v21) is used "... locker subordinierend"¹¹⁷.

The Jews expected, and still expect, the Kingdom of God, the Messiah, in a certain, obvious and visible way, and by "... striking manifestations of power and majesty"¹¹⁸. They demanded the visible wonders to recognize the coming of the Kingdom of God¹¹⁹(cf. e.g. Mk 12,38par; Mt 16,1; Jn 2,23).

¹¹⁵Cf. Wendland, Korinther, p.18: "Bei beiden Wegen der Offenbarung hebt Paulus ihren Ursprung in der unbedingten Freiheit göttlichen Handelns unmißverständlich hervor".

¹¹⁶Allo, Aux Corinthiens, p.16; similarly: Lietzmann, Korinther, p.169

¹¹⁷BDR § 457; Weiß, 1.Korinther, p.30

¹¹⁸Prior, 1Corinthians, p.39

The Greeks "request wisdom", σοφίαν ζητοῦσιν, and σοφία is here identical with σοφία τοῦ κόσμου (v20), and διὰ τῆς σοφίας (v21): it is the worldly wisdom which, for the Greeks in particular, had to present plausible ideas in a convincing and persuasive rhetorical manner¹²⁰.

So Paul describes two typical religious attitudes of his time: one of them needs visibility, the other needs intellectualism. Each of these attitudes, however, will always end up a blind-alley, and both are the signs of those who perish.

- v23 The only way to come to a certain knowledge of God's wisdom is the foolishness of preaching, i.e. the preaching of the crucified Christ, the proclamation of the "word of the cross".

It is the "crucified Christ" who is the centre of Christian proclamation, and this centre became a "stumbling block", an object of anger, a scandal for the Jews. A crucified Messiah "... was an insult to their messianic hopes which were essentially political"¹²¹. A crucified Messiah offended the Jewish religious expectation, and attacked their religious traditions: Someone who was crucified died as an outcast, and was cursed by God (cf. Deut 21,23; Gal 3,13)¹²².

The Greeks, however, regarded such a Christian proclamation as simple foolishness. It could not satisfy their quest for wisdom¹²³.

The conventional ways of coming to knowledge of God failed when the crucified Jesus of Nazareth was proclaimed as the Messiah because "... die Kreuzesbotschaft öffnet sich nicht menschlichem Erkennenwollen und Denken, sondern nur den Gerufenen"¹²⁴.

- v24 is the climax of Paul's argument. Κλητός is the key-word in this verse.

The "called", κλητοί - cf. 1,2: κλητοὺς ἁγίους - are those who are saved by faith, and for them the "word of the cross" is no longer a σκάνδαλον, or a μωρία, but it is the fulfilment of God's power and wisdom.

¹¹⁹Cf. Wendland, Korinther, p.18

¹²⁰Cf. Allo, Aux Corinthiens, p.17

¹²¹Hering, 1Corinthians, p.10

¹²²Cf. Weiß, 1.Korinther, p.32f: "... die Juden müssen, ..., den am Schandpfahl Hingerichteten als einen von Gott geächteten Verbrecher beurteilen, und müssen es als Lästerung empfinden, wenn die Christen ihn für den gottgesandten Retter halten".

¹²³Cf. Hering, 1Corinthians, p.10: "A God ignominiously condemned and executed could not be taken seriously".

¹²⁴Lietzmann, Korinther, p.169; similarly: Wendland, Korinther, p.18

Here, Paul sums up what is decisive for accepting the gospel: it is the Divine call as God's previous initiative. It is God's decision to call the people, and He calls everybody, the Jew and the Greek.

Both groups are closely connected by τε καί¹²⁵. The socio-cultural differences vanish because they are both called on the same basis: in the crucified Christ. As the crucified one, he is God's power, θεοῦ δύναμιν, and God's wisdom, θεοῦ σοφίαν.

This sentence marks the end of Paul's first argument in our context which he has carried through to its conclusion. His starting-point was v17 where he introduced on the one hand the word 'wisdom', οὐκ ἐν σοφίᾳ λόγου, and on the other hand the theme of the "crucified Messiah", ἵνα μὴ κενωθῇ ὁ σταυρὸς τοῦ Χριστοῦ. During the whole argument from v18-24 he kept this antithesis - with some variations - in his mind. The idea of e.g. θεοῦ σοφίαν has appeared already in v21a, and is now repeated in v24b. If we tried to put his train of thought in a scheme we would see that there is always the dualism of "Believers" and non-Believers".

So we can say that it was resolved in God's wisdom to make Christ His power and His wisdom. Because God revealed His power and His wisdom in the crucified Christ, we have to realize that this "... Christ is God's nature"¹²⁶.

v25 draws the final conclusion of v18-24.

By giving a general statement Paul brings the whole argument to its end. Its style is a parallelism which is "... also in a chiasmic relation to v24: τὸ μωρόν, 'folly', answers to ἡ σοφία, 'wisdom'; τὸ ἄσθενές, 'weakness', answers to ἡ δύναμις, 'power'"¹²⁷.

Although man has regarded the preaching of the cross as the salvation of mankind merely as God's foolishness, it is still wiser than man's wisdom, and although man has seen in the crucified Christ only God's weakness and powerlessness, it is still stronger and more powerful than the strength of man.

So we conclude that everything which is rooted in God, and which comes from God to man, overcomes and defeats all human, worldly strength, power, and wisdom. This is the Divine paradox which the apostle is the messenger of.

¹²⁵BDR § 444₃ "τε καί verknüpft enger als das einfache καί. ... Die Verbindung von Ἰουδαῖοι und Ἕλληνες geschieht fast immer durch τε καί".

¹²⁶Conzelmann, 1Corinthians, p.47

¹²⁷Conzelmann, 1Corinthians, p.48

In v26 a new argument begins.

Paul repeats the idea of κλητοί, v24, and he asks the members of the Corinthian congregation to "consider their calling".

Βλέπετε is (1) an imperative, and (2) it is also a dialogue element of diatribe style¹²⁸. The passages of v18-25 and v26ff are linked by the common terminology and idea of "election", κλητοί - κλητοίς.

The apostle wants his "brothers" in Corinth to examine their call, to take into consideration their status when they were called¹²⁹. In the following it seems as though he takes up again the list of v20 by repeating three times the same rhetorical figure. Although there is no direct link between v20 and v26, the basic ideas are the same.

Only the emphasis differs: v20 stressed the educational status, and v26 emphasizes the social position. Yet, in this period, "education" mostly indicated a high social rank¹³⁰.

However, the difference between v20 and v26 is that v20 asks questions which refer to the topic of σοφία, and v26 refers these statements to the "... dominant note of God's choice or call"¹³¹.

Ὅτι πολλοί emphasizes that there have not been many members of the Corinthian church who are worthy enough to receive God's calling. There were "not many wise according to the flesh". Κατὰ σάρκα should be better interpreted as "according to human, worldly standards"(!).

There were also "not many powerful, or strong, or mighty people", and finally there were "not many well-born", or "nobly born", εὐγενεῖς. Yet, it has to be admitted that there must have been some of them in the congregation¹³². This is the present situation in Corinth.

If one considers their human standards, there is no obvious and compelling reason why God should have elected them. However, each of them belongs to the church because of the Divine and compelling calling!

¹²⁸Conzelmann, 1Corinthians, p.49

¹²⁹Conzelmann, 1Corinthians, p.49: "κλητοί is here the act of calling rather than the state of being called".

Similarly: Barrett, 1Corinthians, p.57: "Paul uses here an abstract noun which most naturally denotes the process of calling, but here means 'the circumstances in which you were called', and this points forward to the kind of person called and the nature of the community brought into being by the call".

¹³⁰Cf. Theißen, Soziale Schichtung, p.236

¹³¹Moffatt, 1Corinthians, p.19

¹³²Cf. Theißen, Soziale Schichtung, p.235: "..., so steht ja eins fest: daß es einige gegeben hat".

v27f Paul explains immediately the purpose of the Divine action, and he takes up and works out "... Christologically the Jewish idea of the overthrow of the lofty and the exalting of the lowly by God" 133.

The structure of v27f is a marvellous example of a 'parallelismus membrorum' 134.

Yet, there is also a very close relationship between v27f and v26 because v27f repeats those groups of people - οἱ σοφοί, οἱ δυνατοί, οἱ εὐγενεῖς - which have been already mentioned in v26.

The main idea, however, is that "God has chosen", that God has carried out His election, ἐξελέξατο. Through God's κλησίς and His election, His choice of those who are foolish, τὰ μωρά; who are weak, τὰ ἀσθενῆ; and of those who count for nothing in the eyes of the wise and strong, God wanted to put to shame the wise, τοὺς σοφούς, and the strong, τὰ ἰσχυρά. So in His electing action God became a friend, an ally of those with low, or no reputation. All this has the purpose of putting to shame those who are of high worldly reputation, ἵνα κατασχύνεσθαι.

The third part of this parallelism has a notable addition. Paul contrasts εὐγενής, v26, with τὰ ἀγενῆ, "the insignificant of the world", and he adds τὰ ἐξουθενημένα, "the despised", those who are of no account. They are also regarded as nothing: τὰ μὴ ὄντα. But again, these people are elected by God with the purpose that those who have a higher reputation, who are of noble birth, who really count according to worldly standards, "may be nullified", ἵνα τὰ ὄντα καταργήσῃ. It seems as if Paul alludes with τὰ μὴ ὄντα to a 'creatio ex nihilo', but here this 'creatio ex nihilo' almost certainly also has sociological implications 135. By the use of the neuter gender of the adjectives it seems as if Paul intends to generalize his opinion 136.

v29 gives the reason why God did not choose the people according to their worldly standards, positions, or human qualities.

133Conzelmann, 1Corinthians, p.50

134See the quotation of Blaß, § 82,5 in: Weiß, 1.Korinther, p.35; similarly: BDR § 490₄

135Cf. Theißen, Soziale Schichtung, p.233 n.3

136Barrett, 1Corinthians, p.58 contra Wilckens, Weisheit und Torheit, p.41 where Wilckens is of the opinion that Paul quotes a view of the upper-class-citizens about the others: "Die unteren Schichten waren eben niemand und galten als nicht existent".

"Noone can vaunt himself that he has been chosen for qualities esteemed by men, like erudition, social influence or position"¹³⁷. God's election leaves no space for self-pride, self-esteem, and self-reliance, and so no one can boast, *μὴ καυχῆσθαι*, although man loves to do so.

"Every man", *πᾶσα σάρξ* (a hebraism: כָּל בָּשָׂר¹³⁸) includes also the members of the church.

If the Christians bear in mind - always! -, when they consider where they are rooted in, and how they have become Christians, then it is absolutely impossible for them to pride themselves on their being believers "before God". A Christian who boasts about his status which he was "granted by God" becomes utterly ridiculous. The whole Christian existence depends not on man's own "... merits but on God's call"¹³⁹.

So we conclude that the existence of the Believers as the elect people is based radically and completely on God's electing action, on his choosing call¹⁴⁰. There does not remain the slightest possibility of boasting or showing pride especially not "before God".

v30f *Ἐξ αὐτοῦ* refers back to *τοῦ θεοῦ* of v29¹⁴¹.

It describes the Christian's descent as being "from God" as well as being rooted "in Christ Jesus". *Ἐξ αὐτοῦ* bears the full emphasis in this sentence, and now it should undoubtedly be clear where the basis of Christian existence is to be found. It is God's election: He called them to be His people, to belong to Him, and in His calling they received a new nature, they became a new creation (see above: τὰ μὴ ὄντα!). Yet, the act of God's creation is always bound to His word. When God calls, then He brings forth - effectively(!) - a new creature and a new creation. But they are only this new creation "in Christ Jesus". Both 'places': "from God", and "in Christ Jesus" are closely linked with each other. One cannot have the one without the other. Only in this very close connection the becoming of and the being a Christian has a firm and sure ground!

"In Christ" we find the foundation for our salvation. *Ὅς ἐγενήθη* (= 'passivum divinum'¹⁴²) "a source of wisdom from God for us".

¹³⁷Hering, 1Corinthians, p.12

¹³⁸BDR § 275₃

¹³⁹Barrett, 1Corinthians, p.59

¹⁴⁰Cf. Wilckens, Weisheit und Torheit, p.43

¹⁴¹Weiβ, 1.Korinther, p.38: "Mit großem Nachdruck nimmt *ἐξ αὐτοῦ* das vorhergehende *τοῦ θεοῦ* auf, ..."

¹⁴²Cf. Weiβ, 1.Korintherbrief, p.39: "... daß Christus uns Weisheit geworden ist von Gott aus".

It is God who made Christ the "(source of) wisdom", and by this He made him the "source of salvation", too.

This wisdom outdoes the human wisdom by the Divine plan of salvation through the cross (cf. v24f). It is unfolded in three terms:

- (1) "righteousness" to mankind which means that "... we are on his account acceptable to God, inasmuch as he expiated our sins by his death"¹⁴³;
- (2) "holiness" which enables man to serve God; and
- (3) "redemption" which delivered man "... from all bondage to sin, and from all misery that flows from it"¹⁴⁴.

These expressions can be regarded as a further explanation of what can be found in this "source of wisdom", and they all "... refer to the action of God-in-Christ and therefore God-in-the-Church"¹⁴⁵.

In this way Paul unfolds at the end of this passage God's, and only God's wisdom and plan for the salvation of mankind.

The last verse confirms the preceding arguments. It is not a precise scriptural argument but seems like an extract from LXX Jer 9,22f: it emphasizes that there is no place for any self-pride. The logical consequence should be: "he who boasts let him boast in the Lord" because here the foolishness of the cross is proclaimed. In this Divine call which calls people to become the people of God we find the only basis of election, of our being chosen.

4.2 1CORINTHIANS 2,6-9

4.20 The Context

When Paul carried out his missionary-labour in Corinth, he did not come "with lofty words or wisdom". On the contrary: he "decided to know nothing ... except Jesus Christ and him crucified" (2,2:RSV). This refers back to 1,17f.23: the crucified Christ is Paul's only theme in his preaching.

In 2,1-5 he has just denied the "plausible words of wisdom", and this left the impression that he refused every kind of wisdom, except the Divine wisdom of the crucified Messiah. But now he puts - surprisingly enough - the full emphasis on σοφία, and this right from the beginning¹⁴⁶.

¹⁴³Calvin, Corinthians, p.93

¹⁴⁴Calvin, Corinthians, p.94

¹⁴⁵Ruef, Corinth, p.15

¹⁴⁶Cf. Wendland, Korinther, p.23: "Der neue Einsatz des Paulus wirkt fast verblüffend. Eben noch wurde die Weisheit scharf abgelehnt, und jetzt nimmt Paulus denselben Begriff in positivem Sinne auf und für sich in Anspruch: auch er kennt Weisheit und kann sie verkündigen".

4.21 The Text

- 2,6 "However, it is wisdom that we are proclaiming among the
mature,
wisdom neither of this present age,
nor of the rulers of this present age who are doomed to
perish;
2,7 but we are proclaiming God's hidden wisdom in a mystery
which God predestined before the ages for our glory,
2,8 which none of the rulers of the present age understood;
for if they had understood they would not have crucified
the Lord of glory.
2,9 But as it is written:
'what the eye has never seen,
and the ear has never heard,
and what has never entered the heart of man,
all this God kept in readiness for those who love him'."

4.22 The Exegesis

- v6 By putting "wisdom" right at the beginning of this sentence, Paul stresses the fact that "we impart wisdom".

Yet, he qualifies it immediately: the addressees of such a message have to be the "mature", or "perfect" ones. It is debatable whether this means that they are either "... die vollendeten Pneumatiker"¹⁴⁷, or the "... ethically perfect Christians"¹⁴⁸. The result of such a modern interpretation and understanding of τέλειοι would finally create a two-class-Christianity.

Then it consists on the one hand of the "perfect" and "mature" people who are able to understand the full Christian message because of their true and perfect knowledge and their perfect life-style.

On the other hand there are the "immature and imperfect" people.

This cannot be intended by Paul. He surely does not divide the Corinthian congregation into these two groups.

It may be the best solution if we then interpret τέλειοι in a polemical and ironical way. A proper interpretation seems to be that there are no perfect and mature people, no people of true wisdom, but all are of the same kind, and all Christians have the same foundation: God's calling in Jesus Christ (cf. 1,26.30)¹⁴⁹.

¹⁴⁷Cf. Lietzmann, Korinther, p.11; similarly: Ruef, Corinth, p. 18f; Héring, Aux Corinthiens, p.16

¹⁴⁸Cf. Grosheide, 1Corinthians, p.63; and Barrett, 1Corinthians, p.69 who discusses such a possibility of ethical perfection, and rejects it in the end.

Paul continues with a definition, not of what he understands by τέλειος, but of what he means by σοφία. He defines it in v6b in a twofold negative sentence which is structured in a synthetical 'parallelismus membrorum'¹⁵⁰. The wisdom that he does preach is "neither of this age", "nor of the rulers of this present age". There is no worldly evidence, no world-centred origin for this true wisdom that Paul imparts. The rulers of this world do not know anything about the wisdom the apostle is proclaiming, and which is identical with the Divine wisdom.

This is the reason why they will be "brought to nothing", why they are "doomed to perish". So "... Paul not merely permits but encourages the demythologizing of the primitive Christian beliefs, in part - but only in part"¹⁵¹.

v7 is the antithesis to the statement about "wisdom" in v6b.

Ἀλλά is adversative to δέ in v6b, and introduces the positive definition of 'wisdom'. This wisdom is radically opposed to the wisdom of the present age. It is "God's hidden wisdom" which Paul and the other missionaries "proclaim", λαλοῦμεν (1.p.pl.; cf. v6), and it has nothing in common with the wisdom of the "rulers of this age".

This Divine wisdom is proclaimed "in a mystery", ἐν μυστηρίῳ. Although some exegetes understand μυστήριον as a gnostic term¹⁵², we have to realize that "... μυστήριον is firmly connected with the kerygma of Christ" in the Pauline corpus¹⁵³.

If we take this into consideration, then we have to ask the question of how a mystery can remain "a hidden wisdom" if there is someone who proclaims it? It seems to be difficult to say that God's wisdom "... is hidden in the sense that it has only been disclosed in the recent historical event of Christ crucified", and "... has nothing to do with persuasive words of wisdom"¹⁵⁴. On the contrary! Paul is disclosing all the time the mystery of Christ, he is revealing the mystery in his proclamation, and it has become perceptible because this unveiled mystery has already saved many people by bringing them to faith.

¹⁴⁹Cf. Barrett, 1Corinthians, p.69: "... Paul does not have a simple Gospel of the cross for babes (3,1), and a different wisdom-Gospel for the perfect (...). All Christians are potentially perfect or mature in Christ (Col 1,28), ... This is not a gnostic distinction between earthly and spiritual men".

¹⁵⁰This 'parallelismus membrorum' is also a conclusion 'a minori ad maius' because the ἄρχοντες are the rulers over the whole earthly affairs, they are the sovereigns over the time of the world!

¹⁵¹Barrett, 1Corinthians, p.70

¹⁵²Cf. e.g.: Wilckens, Weisheit und Torheit, p.64ff

¹⁵³Bornkamm, art. μυστήριον κτλ, p.825²²⁻²⁴

¹⁵⁴Barrett, 1Corinthians, p.71

Perhaps we may understand "mystery" better, when we compare it to a "riddle". We have to draw a decisive distinction between a riddle and a mystery. As soon as a "riddle" is solved, its value is lost. A "mystery", however, gets the longer one is in touch with it, and the more one becomes to know about it - more and more secret and mysterious. So a mystery will never be solved¹⁵⁵, and if it should be solved it changes immediately its character. Then it becomes a "riddle".

By taking into account such an understanding of "mystery", it becomes obvious why it is still "a hidden wisdom", although it is proclaimed by the apostolic kerygma.

v7b Ἦν προώρισεν ὁ θεὸς πρὸ τῶν αἰώνων εἰς δόξαν ἡμῶν adds another aspect to the secrecy of this Divine wisdom.

It was God who "predestined" this mystery "before the ages for our glory". God concealed in His eternal wisdom the redemption of mankind. Yet, the way of redemption was already "determined", προώρισεν, "before the ages". In these words we have one explicit declaration in which to search for the place of man's salvation.

GOD "PREDESTINED" His plan to save and to bring salvation to mankind already before any man existed. God decided before the beginning of the world to save mankind by sending His Son, and giving him up to death on the cross. That cross "... had been decreed from all eternity; it was God's original, eternal purpose, designed to culminate in our glory"¹⁵⁶, εἰς δόξαν ἡμῶν.

In our context, δόξα is "... die Seinsweise der Erlösten im Reiche Gottes, dessen Herrlichkeit die ihrige werden soll. Andererseits aber ist das Mysterium des Heils in Christus schon Geschichte und Wirklichkeit geworden; nur darum kann jetzt von der zukünftigen Herrlichkeit der Christen geredet werden"¹⁵⁷.

v8, however, gives the negative effect of God's hidden wisdom.

God Himself knows the mystery, and decreed it before every time began. Therefore "none of the rulers of this age understood it".

The two relative clauses - v7b.8a - form a strong antithesis. While it is God in the first statement "who decreed" this wisdom, it is said in the second statement that "no one understood it", οὐδεὶς ... ἔγνωκεν. Paul defines the subject by the attribute τῶν ἀρχόντων τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου (cf. v6b).

¹⁵⁵Cf. Bonhoeffer, Lesebuch, p.31f: "... Das Geheimnis bleibt Geheimnis. Es entzieht sich unserem Zugriff. ..."

¹⁵⁶Moffatt, 1 Corinthians, p.28

¹⁵⁷Wendland, Korinther, p.24

So, even the highest rulers of the earth did not have the faculty to understand and recognize, to know what God had preordained for the world, namely its redemption through the cross of Christ Jesus.

Otherwise, this is Paul's conviction, that if they had conceived what God's plan was, they would never have crucified the "Lord of glory". Εἰ γὰρ ᾔγνωσαν is the fundamental condition for the following argument. But this assumption already implies the negative answer: they have not understood¹⁵⁸, and therefore they have crucified the "Lord of glory".

v9 begins with the usual citation-formula καθὼς γέγραπται.

Ἀλλὰ is an adversative conjunction which is in contrast to the preceding irrealis. The text is contrasted grammatically to v8b: οὐκ ἂν ... ἐσταύρωσαν ... ἀλλά, but as far as content is concerned, it explains v7a: λαλοῦμεν θεοῦ σοφίαν ἐν μυστηρίῳ κτλ¹⁵⁹.

Although it is no direct LXX quotation, and although there are several, differing reminiscences¹⁶⁰ Paul uses the usual citation-formula. Probably it is his purpose to give a conclusive authority to it.

"No eye has seen and no ear has heard" indicates that all human sense organs have failed to perceive the Divine wisdom. And even the "heart" as the centre of all human perceptive faculty did not grasp this wisdom.

But this wisdom is prepared and is kept in readiness, "is set ready", ἡτοίμασεν, by God for those "who love him", τοῖς ἀγαπῶσιν αὐτόν.

So, everything is dependent on God's grace and on His love, if we are to become those who understand His wisdom. This hidden wisdom in a mystery, however, is nothing other than the cross of Christ Jesus.

¹⁵⁸Allo, Aux Corinthiens, p.42

¹⁵⁹Contra Grosheide, 1Corinthians, p.66 who is of the opinion that this "... quotation is consequently not introduced in order to prove some of the foregoing statements". Instead, he takes v9 as an 'anacolouthon', and connects it with v10. Grosheide is right that this is no proof in our general understanding, but it is an affirmation which Paul uses to substantiate what he said in the foregoing verses.

¹⁶⁰E.g. of the Bible: Is 64.3; 65.16; Ps 31.20; or rabbinical literature; or apocalyptic texts: Asc.Is.11.34; cf. Conzelmann, 1Corinthians, p.63f.

Similarly: Lietzmann, Korinther, p.13 who regards the whole verse as an apocryphal quotation, and refers to another apocryphal quotation in Eph 5.14; and Wendland, Korinther, p.24.

See in particular the very detailed discussion in: Wilckens, Weisheit und Torheit, p.76-80; he understands it as a gnostic text.

To understand this, it is indispensable that God calls us with His call to faith, and to love for Him.

If this takes place, then we shall see what God has prepared for us: His redemption and salvation.

This work is the work of GOD ALONE, and it only comes to reality 'sola gratia'. As a response to this gracious work we love God, and then it is the love which is the criterion, "... the touchstone of Christian maturity and spirituality"¹⁶¹.

4.23 A Fuller CONCLUSION to the three PASSAGES

4.23.1 The Context: an Exhortation

If we now attempt a résumé of the three sections - 1,18-25; 1,26-31; 2,6-9 -, we have to realize first of all that these texts are found in the context of an exhortation

In 1,10 Paul began the paragraph with παρακαλῶ δὲ ὑμᾶς, and this subject has not changed until now.

Paul responds to quarrels within the congregation of Corinth. In 1,10-3,23 Paul deals alternately with the problem of "wisdom", and the problem of "factions", but both problems are in a close relationship to one another.

4.23.2 The New Wisdom, and the Word of the Cross

In our first texts - 1,20-31 - Paul has to cope with the problem that some members of the congregation were flattered and attracted by some kind of 'new' missionaries and preachers with either a Greek-philosophical or a Jewish-religious background. These preachers obviously brought some kind of a new "wisdom", and probably first of all the educated church-members were fascinated and attracted by these new ideas.

Paul however, was afraid of the splitting effect of this human and philosophical σοφία-teaching which was probably reserved - as it happened later on in the 'Christian-gnosis-movement' - to some especially inspired people.

Contrary to them Paul develops his σοφία-concept which consists in the preaching of the λόγος τοῦ σταυροῦ. This is God's wisdom, and it is accessible to everyone who listens to this message. Those who listened to it, and came to faith, i.e.: who responded faithfully, were called by God's calling.

This CALLING does not need a special link which can be found in our human being. It is of no importance whether the called person is rich or poor, whether he is educated or not, whether the person is a Jew or a Greek, whether he is a master or a

¹⁶¹Barrett, 1Corinthians, p.73

slave. GOD's CALLING is a GENERAL one, and the person who comes to faith is God's ELECT.

This calling, however, is always the same at every time for every person, and it can always be regarded as a 'creatio ex nihilo' (cf. 1,28). The NEW CREATION comes by the preaching of the apostle. He preaches the "word of the cross" as salvation, and as God's power (cf. 1,18.21.23-25).

4.23.3

The Election of Jesus Christ, and of Every Single Believer

God's ELECTION is also a free election: it does not depend on human links, and in the same way God was free to predestine this salvation in Jesus Christ in a sovereign and hidden act, so that no one knew anything about it. God has the only active part in the salvation of mankind: He predestined in His freedom the salvation in Jesus Christ before all the ages. This is God's wisdom, and this text might give us the basis for the statement that JESUS CHRIST was, and still is, GOD's FIRST ELECT of all creation.

But because this 'first elect' died on the cross, God's salvation - although accessible to everyone - is still a mystery. This has its reason in the fact that a crucified Messiah is not regarded as the appropriate manifestation of God by human beings.

Therefore, the gospel of this Messiah has to be preached and made known to everyone, everywhere, and at every time.

So both things are always dependent on God, and the person who has been brought to faith can only respond with a 'soli Deo gloriam', both in view of his calling, and in view of his salvation which has been predestined in God, and which was carried out by Jesus Christ.

4.23.4

A Summary

In this way, because God does and did everything in Christ Jesus, who is the contradiction to human wisdom, Paul can refer to the calling, and makes them aware of the fact that all of them are called by God with the same calling.

In short, Paul says that their calling - which is God's wisdom and a holy calling - is the same for everybody in the congregation, and consequently the Corinthians do not need a wisdom which differs from God's wisdom that Paul is preaching.

Therefore he can use the ideas, and the terms of "election" and "predestination" in the context of an EXHORTATION.

This reminds the Corinthians of their total dependence on God's work, and God's work, as their common basis, is also the basis for their unity and community.

4.3 1CORINTHIANS 7,17-24

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4.30 The Context and the Text

In the context of our passage, Paul apparently answers questions which he has received from the Corinthian church in a written form, e.g. 7,1 περὶ δὲ ᾧ ἐγράψατε. But our text does not answer a question. Paul obviously seems to react to an urgent problem which has occurred in this church, and so it might be understood as an "insertion"¹⁶².

It says:

7,17 "But to each one according to what the Lord has apportioned,
to each one according to what God has called,
so he may conduct himself.

And so I make this rule in all the churches.

7,18 The one who is called as a circumcised
may not undo his circumcision,
the one who has been called as uncircumcised
may not be circumcised.

7,19 The circumcision is worthless
and the uncircumcision is worthless,
but (what counts is) the observance of God's commandments.

7,20 Everyone is to remain in that calling in which he was called.

7,21 If you are called as a slave, never mind;
but if you are able to become free, make the most of it.

7,22 For the slave who has been called in the Lord is a freedman of
the Lord;

likewise the free man who has been called is a slave of Christ.

7,23 You were bought with a price,
do not become the slaves of men.

7,24 Each one in what he has been called, brothers,
let him remain in that position (to which he was called) before
God."

4.31 The Exegesis

In the previous paragraphs Paul was reflecting on the problems of marriage, and this theme belongs to the more general theme of "the Christian's status in life". In this context he inserts the problems of "slavery" and "circumcision".

¹⁶²Cf. Wendland, Korinther, p.53; Weiß, 1.Korinther, p.183: "... eine Einlage".

v17 functions here as a link between v16 and v18.

It is a general principle, a rule which is valid either for marriages with different partners, or the problems of "circumcision" and "slavery".

The rule is introduced by εἰ μή which indicates the end of a discussion, and emphasizes the important idea¹⁶³. This important thought is expressed in the protasis with two parallel clauses:

(1) talks about the "Lord's apportionment", ὁ κύριος ... ἐμέρισεν. The gifts, the personal characteristic features belong to everybody by nature. These gifts, here particularly understood against the background of life-style, i.e. married-unmarried, are given by the Lord to everyone at a specific point of time (ἐμέρισεν is an aorist!), and they will remain. These gifts characterize the person in his personality.

(2) emphasizes the Divine work. It is the "calling of the man". The human status of being called is the result of God's unique call, and this status is always present. It extends from the beginning to the end. This is expressed by using the perfect tense, κέκληκεν. God has called once, at a certain point of time in history, and the result still remains¹⁶⁴.

In this protasis Paul sums up the argument that every man has received gifts, and that every person has also received a call. Both events have taken place in 'space and history', both are closely related to human lives. "God", or synonymously "the Lord", is the source of "gift" and "call". Yet, each man has received both in an individual, personal way.

According to the gift and according to his call, the person may "conduct" his life. The apodosis leaves no doubt about what Paul said beforehand, and it stresses his thoughts. Paul takes seriously everyone who is a Christian: every status in which a man has been called, and every characteristic feature, every individual gift has Divine roots. So each one is important for the Christian life. Nothing shall be forgotten in the church, or by the Christian himself. SELF-ACCEPTANCE is probably the best word to describe what Paul is writing about (this corresponds also to v7).

¹⁶³BDR § 449.

¹⁶⁴We already solved with our interpretation the textcritical problem which we find in v17 according to N.A.²⁶.

P⁴⁶c.N.B.81.630.1739.pc and N²¹ read μεμέρισεν.

N.A.²⁶.P⁴⁶x.N².(A).C.D.F.G.Ψ.Π. read ἐμέρισεν. This reading should be preferred because it is the 'lectio difficilior'. The 'parallelismus membrorum' however, does not need an absolute alignment.

"The status in life - married-single; slave-free; Jew-Gentile - of the man who is converted to Christianity is not something which he leaves behind, when he enters the church. He brings it with him. It is part of his calling, his gift, his way of life"¹⁶⁵.

Paul gave this rule to all his churches. He "... is not making a special case of the Corinthians, nor is there good reason why he should do so. There is no suggestion that his apostolic authority is geographically limited"¹⁶⁶.

v17 as a whole is a skilful transition from the preceding paragraphs to the following one in v18-24 because it summarizes the previous discussion, and mentions the dominant theme of the following argument.

It is the topic of GOD's CALL which he unfolds in v18-24: he applies it in v18-20 to the theme of "circumcision"; and in v21-24 to the theme of "slavery".

Both "... circumcision and slavery represented the two most divisive phenomena in the world of the New Testament. Circumcision constituted the greatest religious barrier, slavery the biggest social barrier. In each case, Paul is bold enough to assert, that the salvation of God in Christ has rendered them null and void"¹⁶⁷.

v18 introduces the problem of "circumcision" in a very elaborate style¹⁶⁸.

It is an antithetical 'parallelismus membrorum', and the middle links form a chiasm:

v18a περιτετμημένος τις ἐκλήθη, μὴ ἐπισπάσθω

v18b ἐν ἀκροβυστίᾳ κέκληται τις, μὴ περιτεμνέσθω¹⁶⁹.

¹⁶⁵Ruef, Corinth, p.59

¹⁶⁶Barrett, 1Corinthians, p.168

¹⁶⁷Prior, 1Corinthians, p.130; similarly: Wendland, Korinther, p.53

¹⁶⁸Cf. Weiß, 1.Korinther, p.184: "Es folgt einer der reizvollsten und lehrreichsten Abschnitte paulinischer Schriftstellerei. Im anmutig leichten Satzbau der Diatribe wendet P. den allgemeinen Grundsatz auf verschiedene Lebensverhältnisse an".

¹⁶⁹Therefore, it makes no sense rearrange

κέκληται τις in τις κέκληται as P¹⁵.D^x.F.G.Ψ.1881.pc propose;

or to read the perfect tense κέκληται into the aorist τις ἐκλήθη as D².¹⁷⁰

. propose. Both proposals are the 'lectio facillior' which try to align v18b with v18a.

Cf. Weiß, 1.Korinther, p.185: "... τις ἐκλήθη ... κέκληται τις: dies ist natürlich durch die kirchliche Textredaktion konformierend verwischt".

In addition to this we find the proposal of N.A.²⁶ very well attested in:

P⁴⁶.R.A.B.P.33.81.104.365.630.1175.1739.2464.pc. and in N²¹.

In the style of diatribe Paul works out his general statement. He firstly talks to the one who is called as a "circumcised", i.e. as a Jew. The converted Jew shall not undo his circumcision to conceal it (cf. 1Macc 1,15). And the one who has been called as an "uncircumcised", i.e. as a Greek, as a Gentile may not try to become a "circumcised".

Paul refuses to let those who have been called with the same Divine call, yet in different religious contexts either as a Jew or a Gentile, level out their differences. Their change of standing will never influence the reality that it is only God's call to faith - 'sola gratia' - which turned both of them into a Christian.

Everyone has heard the same call, and God's call has the same value for everybody, and consequently the religious backgrounds do not matter at all.

- v19 The only thing that actually matters is GOD's CALLING, and this call nullifies all the outward distinctions and puts everybody's faith on the same firm footing. Therefore, Paul is able to say that circumcision is worthless, "counts for nothing".

To the Jews, this statement must have been extremely provocative. "Circumcision" was always the sign of their being called, of their election, of their covenant with God. Despite the Jewish protest, Paul is convinced that these outward signs count for nothing if someone is called by God's calling.

Beginning with the adversative conjunction ἀλλά, Paul mentions positively that the only thing which counts is "the observance of God's commandments"¹⁷⁰. Τήρησις ἐντολῶν θεοῦ is in this context a 'hapax legomenon'. By saying this, Paul calls attention to the only thing that counts: Devoting "... yourself rather to piety and the duties which God requires, and which are alone precious in his sight"¹⁷¹. OBEDIENCE to God's commandments is a concise definition of any Christian.

¹⁷⁰Wendland, Korinther, p.54: "Diese 'gesetzlich' klingende Formulierung kann im Munde des Paulus nur den verwundern, der nicht weiß, daß die Rechtfertigung des Sünders den Menschen nicht von den Geboten Gottes losbindet, und daß Paulus, der Christus als das Ende des Gesetzes verkündigt (Röm 10,4), dem Antinomismus damit keinen Freibrief geschrieben hat".

¹⁷¹Calvin, Corinthians, p.248;

similarly: Barrett, 1Corinthians, p.169: "... That we keep God's commandments means an obedience to the will of God as disclosed in his Son far more radical than the observance of any code, whether ceremonial or moral, could be. If a man's life has been determined by the obedience of faith (...) conversion to or from Judaism becomes irrelevant".

He could be - first of all, in Paul's church in Corinth - either a Jew or a Gentile, and it is still the characteristic feature of a committed Christian.

So, v20, presents to some extent the conclusion of this first section.

The sentence which is repeated in v24 can be regarded as a 'refrain'¹⁷². As regards its central contents it repeats v17¹⁷³, but now Paul applies it directly to the problem, to the question which he has just answered.

"Each one in the calling in which he has been called, in this let him remain", ἕκαστος ἐν τῇ κλήσει ἣ ἐκλήθη, ἐν ταύτῃ μενέτω. Although κλήσις, in Pauline letters often means the Divine act of calling to faith, it seems as if it has the connotation of the 'circumstances in which the call has taken place'¹⁷⁴.

Yet, as far as the context is concerned Paul is saying that there is no necessity for anyone to change his status. Everyone, either Gentile or Jew, has to remain in that state in which he has been converted to faith by God's call.

And so we conclude the first train of argument that a man is not called to a new status, rather his old status is given a new interpretation. His old status remains, and is accepted by God. It is GOD Himself who gave this old status a new significance.

v21 marks the beginning of a new, "... self-contained section"¹⁷⁵ which treats the problem of "slavery".

It is probably the context, and the theological idea of God's calling that has enabled Paul to discuss and answer this question at this place. It seems as if he reacts to a question which arose from the heterogeneous social make-up of the Corinthian congregation¹⁷⁶. The question was: what shall those who were slaves do when they are converted to the Christian faith?

Paul's first answer seems to be self-evident, sensible and in this context to a certain extent also to be expected: "if you are called as a slave; never mind". This corresponds to the statement he presented in v20. The one who was in slavery when he was converted should not be troubled about it. He shall remain in this social status.

¹⁷²Cf. Weiß, 1.Korinther, p.186: "Der erste Refrain ..."

¹⁷³Fascher, Korinther, p.191: The sentence "... nimmt die Weisung von V.17 wieder auf und präzisiert das περιπατέω als ein μενέτω".

¹⁷⁴Cf. Allo, Aux Corinthiens, p.171: κλήσις "... signifie l'acte d'appel, ou les circonstances dans lesquelles l'appel se fait".

¹⁷⁵Cf. Conzelmann, 1Corinthians, p.127

¹⁷⁶Cf. Theißen, Soziale Schichtung; and Theißen, Die Starken und die Schwachen

This seems to be an intelligible answer because Paul's gospel is not above all 'a gospel of social liberation and egalitarianism at any cost'. Furthermore, slavery was something quite normal at this time. So Paul does not 'preach liberation from slavery for liberty's sake'.

v21b however, makes reference to a situation where a slave can become a freedman. Yet, Paul does not say in what way the slave can become free. And so we might assume that he is talking about a slave who had enough money to buy himself free¹⁷⁷.

The 'anacolouthon' μᾶλλον χρῆσαι is a 'crux interpretum'. Paul left out the apposition, and as a consequence of this there is a still continuing discussion about the object which has to be supplied.

There are several suggestions what we have to supply, like τῇ ἐλευθερίᾳ¹⁷⁸, or τῇ κλήσει¹⁷⁹, and the last proposal is τῇ δουλείᾳ.

The last supplement is favoured by many exegetes¹⁸⁰. However, the question arises immediately whether this interpretation does not make null and void all the Christian involvement and efforts in the 'slave-liberation-movements', or even more concrete: the 'Anti-Apartheid-movement'. And yet, even if we take τῇ δουλείᾳ as the supplement because it suits best in this 'anacolouthon', these Christian involvements are - by no means - rendered invalid.

Undoubtedly, in Paul's understanding, "freedom" is of great value, and a very important 'theologumenon'¹⁸¹ which he often uses in a very dialectical sense, e.g. 1Cor 9,1.19.

¹⁷⁷Cf. Moffatt, 1Corinthians, p.87: "Parenthetically (...) he allows the slave to get manumitted if he has the opportunity, i.e. if his master was willing that he should buy his freedom".

Similarly: Weiß, 1.Korinther, p.188: "Voraussetzung ist hierbei natürlich, daß die Freiheit dem Betr(effenden) nicht etwa geschenkt wird, sondern daß er nur die Möglichkeit hätte, sich selbst loszukaufen".

¹⁷⁸In favour of this are: Schlatter, Paulus, pp.231-236; Calvin, Corinthians, p.249. Cf. also: Wendland, Sklaverei und Christentum, col.102

¹⁷⁹Cf. Grosheide, 1Corinthians, p.170: "... if you can be free, make a better use of your vocation".

¹⁸⁰Cf. Schlier, art. ἐλεύθερος κτλ., p.498²⁸⁻³⁵; Barrett, 1Corinthians, p.170f; Conzelmann, 1Corinthians, p.127; Weiß, 1.Korinther, p.188f;

BDR § 337₂: "Imperativ Aorist - schwer zu scheiden im einzelnen Fall ist vom komplexiven Gebrauch der effektive, zB: 1Kor 7,21: μᾶλλον χρῆσαι (sc. τῇ δουλείᾳ), der Befehl gilt absolut bis zum Ende ohne Rücksicht auf die Dauer".

¹⁸¹For this 'theologumenon' see e.g. the word-statistics in: Schmoller, Handkonkordanz. - ἐλευθερία (9x whole NT; 6x in Paul); ἐλεύθερος (23x in the whole NT; 14x in Paul); ἐλευθερώ (7x in the whole NT; 5x in Paul).

However, here Paul talks about those slaves who were obviously able to free themselves by buying themselves out of slavery. And to these who had the possibility, and enough money, Paul is saying: "stay in that status in which you have been called because this bears witness to Christ towards your master, and towards your fellow-slaves". Therefore: "make the most of your slavery".

In v21 Paul treated the problem of slavery first of all against the background of the general situation in life. His point is that "... once a Christian, what you are or have been remains a part of your calling in Christ"¹⁸².

- v22, however, moves the argument immediately from the situation of the slave's status in every-day life and in general, to the slave's status within the Christian congregation.

There, the one who was called in the worldly status of a slave "is a freedman of the Lord", ὁ γὰρ ἐν κυρίῳ κληθεὶς δοῦλος ἀπελεύθερος κυρίου ἐστίν; and the free man "who has been called is a slave of Christ", ὁ ἐλεύθερος κληθεὶς δοῦλός ἐστιν Χριστοῦ.

v22a and v22b are clauses with a parallel construction which contain a paradox: the slave is free, and the freeman is a slave; i.e.: within the church the gaps which are created by a different social status are bridged.

The slave is enabled to live in the midst of the congregation as a free man "in the Lord" because a change of rule has taken place. The master of the slave is the "Lord" Jesus Christ, and for this "Lord" - who "... in any case was a humble rather than a dignified figure"¹⁸³ - the slave is a freedman, although in his every-day life he remained a slave¹⁸⁴.

"In the same way", the free man is dependent on Christ, and so he became a slave as soon as he was called by God's call.

Here, Paul states the paradox that for every member of the church in Corinth the basis of his existence is the same but with differing effects.

¹⁸²Ruef, Corinth, p.60

¹⁸³Barrett, 1Corinthians, p.171

¹⁸⁴In my opinion it seems to be a little bit too shortsighted if we reduce ἀπελεύθερος only to the fact that he "... has been freed from bondage to sin and death, and to the evil powers of this age" (Barrett, 1Corinthians, p.171) because these liberating facts are also valid for the free man.

I think that Paul was also alluding to the social reality within the congregation as it should be: both slave and free encounter each other in the church on the same level. This must be intended by the paradox in this verse.

It is the holy call of God to the servitude of Christ, and in this way the social differences in the congregation are levelled out.

Not in the sense that everyone has received absolute freedom by now, but that everyone has received a relative freedom which must be characterized as dependence upon Jesus Christ.

This dependence makes the "... differing social ranks irrelevant"¹⁸⁵. Both are free, and both are slaves: this paradox is somehow revolutionary.

In v23 a statement follows which sounds like an EXHORTATION: *τιμῆς ἡγοράσθητε*. It aims at both, at the free man and the slaves. Paul reminds them that God paid a high price for buying them free from sin and death, and bringing them together in the Christian community.

Because of the very high price, he warns them "not to become the slaves of men".

The price which God paid to free the world was a costly one, and it led the believing mankind into freedom. Paul warns those Corinthian Christians who were still slaves not to become the slaves of men, not to depend on the goodwill of their environment. The only existing dependent relationship is the dependence on Jesus Christ, the "Lord", and this finds its true expression in discipleship (which can be discovered behind the argument Paul has developed in v21-23).

v24 repeats with slight changes v20. Paul wants the Christians to stay in the status in which they have been called.

But they have to stay "before God", *παρὰ θεῷ*, which is equivalent to *ἐνώπιον*¹⁸⁶. They stay "before God", yet this does not at all exclude but includes their remaining in their status "before men", too.

"Staying in" means 'remaining in God's sphere', to be determined by Him, and can be regarded as an equivalent of *ἐν κυρίῳ* (v22). "In ihrem irdischen Stande, nicht aus ihm heraus sind Christen von Gott berufen"¹⁸⁷, and there they have to remain "before God".

¹⁸⁵Barrett, 1Corinthians, p.171;

similarly: Lietzmann, Korinther, p.178: "Paulus will ja nur die Gleichgültigkeit der zivilrechtlichen Stellung des Christen angesichts der gemeinsamen Dienstverpflichtung dem Christus gegenüber betonen".

¹⁸⁶Cf. Conzelmann, 1Corinthians, p.129

contra: Weiß, 1.Korinther, p.191f: "Faßt man aber *παρὰ* = *ἐνώπιον* = 'coram' = in den Augen, nach dem Urteil Gottes, so wird vollends die Spitze abgebrochen, denn es kommt ja gerade darauf an, unter den Augen der Menschen in seinem Stande zu bleiben. So ist eine überzeugende Deutung nicht möglich, ..."

¹⁸⁷Wendland, Korinther, p.55

4.32 The Conclusion

We have realized in our exegesis that the context of 1Cor 7,17-24 is that of an EXHORTATION. In this context Paul uses again - surprisingly enough - the idea and the terminology of "election". In our text he is dealing - as in 7,1ff - with the problem of the "status in life", and in this frame of reference he goes into the question of "circumcision" and "slavery".

There might have been trends in Corinth - probably evoked by Paul's proclamation of "freedom", probably evoked by other preachers - that some members wished to annihilate, or at least to change their status. Paul, however, encourages everyone to remain in his status because the basis of his future-life as a Christian is neither a probably better religious tradition, nor a better social standing but the DIVINE CALLING in Christ Jesus ALONE (cf. v18-20).

The basis for Paul's argumentation is always the fact that God called everyone in Jesus Christ for being a Christian. It is not the religious tradition or the worldly reputation that counts before God but HIS CALLING ALONE. This calling is issued to every Christian in the same way because it contains always the message of the crucified Messiah who died for our sake, and who justified the unrighteous and sinners.

Paul's gospel which is always bound to the act of proclamation is always the gospel of the 'iustificatio impiorum'. The status of every person before he was converted into a Christian was man's being a sinner, was his corrupt nature, and this status had to be changed first of all.

This standing, however, was changed by God's calling to faith, and by man's coming to faith. God Himself healed the most important and always broken relationship between Him and man.

Such a knowledge makes Paul so bold to say that worldly and religious status does not count. It is worthless, and therefore he admonishes the Christians in Corinth to be aware of the fact that because of their calling their differences in social ranks count for nothing amongst them.

Everyone has heard God's CALLING as an individual person in his unique status and situation, and therefore it is unnecessary to change wilfully and intentionally the individual status in which he was called by God.

4.4 PHILIPPIANS 3,12-14

4.40 The Problem of Integrity

Paul's letter to the congregation of Philippi is - like 1.2Cor - an occasional letter, and there is - similarly to 2Cor - the problem of integrity.

There are several proposals concerning how to solve this problem. First of all there is the opinion that Phil forms a complete and integral unity, and the discontinuity of argument in Phil 3,1 to 3,2 is explained by reference to new information which Paul received from Philippi¹⁸⁸.

On the other hand this discontinuity of argument calls the integrity of this letter into question.

The discontinuity between 3,1 and 3,2 has led many exegetes to the assumption that 3,2ff is an independent letter of Paul to the Philippian Christians, first of all because Phil 3 itself is a whole and integral unity in argument, and the train of thought has 'no splits and seams'¹⁸⁹. On the basis of this observation, many exegetes draw the conclusion that there are at least two letters¹⁹⁰, or even three letters¹⁹¹.

Despite the still continuing discussion on the question of integrity, we assume that Phil consists of several Pauline letters which have been compiled by an unknown redactor.

We find our passage in this polemical letter - 3,2-4,3 - where Paul argues against his opponents whom he attacks harshly in 3,2. If we combine Paul's attack in 3,2 with the description of him being a Jew in 3,4a.5f we get some information about these opponents. They were probably 'judaizing gnostics with a Jewish origin'¹⁹².

¹⁸⁸Cf. Mengel, Studien, p.314f: "Mit 3,1 scheint Paulus, noch einmal den 2,18 situativ motivierten Aufruf zur Freude aufnehmend, den Brief, jedenfalls hinsichtlich seines Hauptteiles abschließen zu wollen. Zu diesem Zeitpunkt muß Paulus erneut Nachricht aus Philippi erhalten haben, ... Paulus setzt daraufhin den Brief unvermittelt mit der scharfen Auseinandersetzung mit diesen Irrlehrern fort, ..."

¹⁸⁹Cf. Friedrich, Philipper, p.135: "In Phil 3 gibt es keine Risse und Nähte, sondern das gesamte Kapitel bildet ein einheitliches Ganzes".

¹⁹⁰Cf. e.g. Gnllka, Philipper; Friedrich, Philipper; and others.

¹⁹¹Cf. Beare, Philippians;

Vielhauer, Geschichte, p.159-166 who divides Phil in A) 4,10-20: a letter of thanksgiving; B) 1,1-3,1; 4,4-9,21-23: the letter from prison; and C) 3,2-4,3 as the letter which deals with the problems in Philippi.

¹⁹²Vielhauer, Geschichte, p.165: "Die philippischen Irrlehrer kann man als judaisierende Gnostiker jüdischer Herkunft bezeichnen".

4.41 The Text

Paul continues his argument:

- 3,12 "Not that I have already received it,
or that I am already perfect,

but I hasten for it that I may win
because I have been won by Christ (Jesus).

- 3,13 Brothers,

I do not consider that I have made it my own,
but one (thing I do):

I forget what lies behind,

I reach out toward what lies before me;

- 3,14 I hasten toward the goal for the prize of the upward call
of God in Christ Jesus."¹⁹³

4.42 The Exegesis

- v12 Bearing in mind that Paul conducts a debate with those 'judaizing gnostics' he probably picks up some of their vocabulary by confessing at the same moment that "he has not yet received", and that "he is not yet perfect".

Τελειόω describes the attitude of Paul's rivals. "...I have attained perfection' is their language; he takes it over from them, only to repudiate any such attitude for himself, and to abandon it at once for his own more truly applicable metaphor of the race"¹⁹⁴. His adversaries might be already perfect, might have obtained everything, but for him, the apostle, this is not the case.

It may be of some importance that Paul formulated v12a without a direct object. By doing this the sentence is 'hanging in the balance'. However, any expressed object in this 'anacolouthon' would have meant a restriction of his thought. By writing in such general terms, he shows that he totally rejects the idea of perfection as a state of human existence¹⁹⁵.

¹⁹³Although - according to N.A.²⁶ - vv15f belong also to this passage, we will not discuss them because they begin a new train of thought, and have nothing to do with our overall theme.

¹⁹⁴Beare, Philippians, p.129

¹⁹⁵Cf. Gnllka, Philipper, p.198: "... daß der Satz bewußt objektlos gehalten ist und einfachhin über den Gegensatz des Werdens und Seins, ... reflektiert. Ausgerichtet ist er an τετελειώμαι, das ... den Irrtum schlagwortartig charakterisiert". Similarly: Friedrich, Philipper, p.151

Contra Hawthorne, Philippians, p.151 who thinks that "... Christ, then, and the full significance of this person is the missing object of the verb ἔλαβον".

This explanation raises the question why Paul is able describe himself as someone who regards everything "as loss for the sake of Christ" (v7:RSV), with the exception of "the righteousness from God that depends on faith" (v9:RSV). This is, as I understand Paul, the full significance of Christ.

So Paul styles himself as being "imperfect", and as "not yet at the end", but he "hastens for it that he may win". This is Paul's state: he is someone who is restless, who is not able to settle down. The apostle is still on the way in a hard race. This race has to be finished, and the finish must be reached.

However, he is certain that he can attain the goal, and that he will win in the end "because"¹⁹⁶ "he is won by Christ". The reason for his certainty of attaining the goal is that he is already won by Christ. This is the unshakable basis for his conviction that he will win. Κατελήμφθην reflects his conversion on the Damascus-road¹⁹⁷. This "... divine grace in Paul's conversion is the moving power of his Christian development", and "...the aorist marks the time of his conversion which was literally a seizure"¹⁹⁸.

In this conversion, Christ set Paul on his way, and the apostle is "... content to be only a runner, a viator and not a comprehensor (a wanderer and not an apprehender), content not to have apprehended, content to stretch out empty hands. To be apprehended is enough"¹⁹⁹.

v13 reaffirms v12.

Ἀδελφοί is emphatic, and thus he claims the whole and undivided attention of his readers²⁰⁰.

The first notion seems to repeat v12, but he strongly emphasizes that he does not even dare for his own person "to consider" - λογίζομαι "... expresses the idea of considering, reasoning, reckoning, judging"²⁰¹ - that he has already attained the final goal. Paul regards himself still as an imperfect apostle who is still on his way.

¹⁹⁶Cf. BDR §235₃: ἐφ' ᾧ (= ἐπί + dative marks the reason)

¹⁹⁷Cf. Hawthorne, Philippians, p.152; Dibelius, Philipper, p.70;

Gnilka, Philipper, p.198

¹⁹⁸Vincent, Philippians, p.108;

similarly: Lohmeyer, Philipper, p.145: "Die Zeitformen dieser drei Verben sind sehr charakteristisch: κατελήμφθην meint ein einmaliges Geschehen der Vergangenheit; διώκω ist Form der Gegenwart, die durch nichts eingeschränkt ist; καταλάβω hat endlich einen deutlich futurischen Sinn, es zielt auf die kommende Vollendung".

¹⁹⁹Barth, Philippians, p.108

²⁰⁰Cf. Lohmeyer, Philipper, p.145:

"Mit einer dringlichen Anrede wendet sich Paulus an die Gemeinde zu Philippi; sie ist Mahnung zum Aufmerken und Bitte zum Aufnehmen".

²⁰¹Müller, Philippians, p.123

"But one (thing)" - ἐν δέ is an ellipsis, and we add "I do"
 202 - seems to be Paul's main task: He forgets "what lies behind", and he stretches out for "what lies before him".

This sentence is a perfectly balanced antithesis with an identical number of syllables:

τὰ μὲν ὀπίσω ἐπιλανθάνομενος
 τοῖς δὲ ἔμπροσθεν ἐπεκτεινόμενος.

Paul 'forgets' what happened in his past. This includes not only his former Jewish days (cf. v5f) but especially his former missionary-labour, his successes as well as his failures²⁰³. This 'act of forgetting' hinders and avoids firstly any paralysis which has been provoked by defeats and failures in the past²⁰⁴, and secondly it does not encourage self-satisfaction and relaxation of effort by looking at what has already been done and achieved.

As the antithesis to this forgetting we find the "stretching out to what lies before him". Ἐπεκτείνωμαι, a 'hapax legomenon', describes the posture of a runner. The word pictures "... the racer straining and stretching towards the object he is so eager to reach, as if trying to touch it from his present position"²⁰⁵.

v14 But Paul has not yet finished his self-description which argues against the perfection of his opponents.

He keeps on running, he presses forward, he races toward the goal. Although ὁ σκοπός "... is not a technical term for the end of a race"²⁰⁶, this NT-'hapax legomenon' fits into the context as well as into the picture which Paul has drawn of himself.

He, Paul, only needs a mark, an aim which he can focus on, and which he can orientate himself to. The apostle needs for his run an aim which is situated in his field of vision.

The direction of his running is fixed, made precise by this mark, but "behind" this mark there waits already "the prize", τὸ βραβεῖον, which is more precisely defined by τῆς ἄνω κλήσεως.

What is meant by this apposition? Usually, when Paul makes use of κλήσις, he understands it as the Divine call(ing) to faith, a man's conversion to faith by God's call which is carried out in time and space²⁰⁷.

²⁰²BDR § 481₁

²⁰³Cf. Gnika, Philipper, p.199: "Weil das Ergriffensein von Christus der Ansporn ist, der den Läufer in der Bahn vorantreibt, kann nur die christliche Zeit angesprochen sein, zumal ja nur sie eine klare Orientierung und ein eindeutiges Ziel besitzt".

²⁰⁴Cf. Hawthorne, Philippians, p.153: "... forget in such a way that the past, good or bad will have no negative bearing on one's present spiritual growth or conduct".

²⁰⁵Michael, Philippians, p.162

²⁰⁶Michael, Philippians, p.162

²⁰⁷Cf. Gnika, Philipper, p.200

But here he employs it in a unique way because he added the adjective ἄνω. We have translated it "of the upward call", and consequently we have understood it in the sense that the prize consists of this "upward call" which hints at the "... call of completion or perfection"²⁰⁸.

So Paul is aware of the fact that he will receive a prize which "... is attached to the calling and involved in it"²⁰⁹. This prize is given by God in Christ Jesus.

The whole idea is therefore closely related to Paul's Christology, and as a consequence of this, his Soteriology and Eschatology are strictly attached to it, as well. The Christology gives him the possibility of talking about "an upward call in Christ Jesus"; and this makes him hasten and run - Soteriology; and this gives him also the conviction of a final glorification, perfection and completion - Eschatology; which is included in this "upward call".

4.43 The Conclusion

By drawing the conclusion we may ask whether this text - Phil 3,12-14 - fits into our overall theme of "predestination" and "election", or not?

First of all, we have to realize that Paul uses κλησις in a very unique way, when he describes it as τῆς ἄνω κλήσεως which is "the prize" of his struggle.

But there is also another remarkable notion. In v12 he is talking about his own conversion, and this conversion was not evoked by his own decision. It was Christ's decision to "take hold of him" (v12;NIV), and it was not he who apprehended Christ but CHRIST "apprehended" - the verbal form is that of a 'passivum divinum'! - him. Paul's conversion was an event which encountered him from the outside so forcefully that he had no opportunity for a decision. He was seized by Jesus Christ. Paul often describes this seizure as God's calling, and so this text fits also into the context of our thesis.

Furthermore, we may also regard the unique expression εἰς τὸ βραβεῖον τῆς ἄνω κλήσεως as belonging to our main theme. As we said already, Phil 3 is a polemical letter.

Paul disputes with some adversaries, he fights their attitude of having already attained and reached perfection in this time, and on earth. Such an attitude has to be repudiated. Rather, the Christians - even the apostle - have to run as long as they live. They have to hasten towards a goal and towards a prize. This prize consists in an "upward calling".

²⁰⁸Cf. e.g. Gnllka, Philipper, p.200

²⁰⁹Vincent, Philippians, p.110

With this expression Paul knocks his opponents' self-confidence and their trust in an already attained perfection out of their hands.

By doing this, Paul warns at the same time the Christians in Philippi not to become enslaved to such an attitude which tries to pull down 'the heaven' to 'the earth'. Paul exhorts 'his' congregation in Philippi not to follow such an opinion.

On the contrary, such a view of perfection which is only concentrated on this world and time must be blocked by opening the heavenly dimensions which are still to come. This is Paul's utter conviction.

Therefore, we might accept this expression in its uniqueness as an expression which is caused by the situation in Philippi. Paul exhorts the Philippian Christians not to trust those preachers who say that perfection can be already attained in their life-time. The prize is a matter of hope, and the calling is attached to, and involved in it.

5. "Election" and "Predestination" as an Answer to the Problem of the Unbelieving Jews, and the Believing Gentiles 67

5.0 Introduction

In this section we only examine texts from Rom 9-11. Here Paul tries to find an answer to the besetting and tormenting question why the Gentiles are coming to faith, while the Jews are refusing his Gospel. Therefore he is wrestling, on the one hand with his personal convictions, and on the other hand with his experiences of the present situation.

He knows that he is on a ridge-walk: there is the opinion of other Christians that 'God's word had failed' - at least in Israel -, and there is his utter conviction "that the word of God had not failed".

The texts are from Rom 9 and Rom 11.

5.1 ROMANS 9,6-13

5.10 The Context

In Rom 8,28-30 Paul has used the terminology of "predestination" in the context of a consolation, and as an assurance that the Christians will not fall out of God's hands. Therefore he has ended Rom 8 appropriately with a hymnic confession in which he has praised the unchanging and ever faithful attitude of God towards mankind: nothing "will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (8,39;RSV).

But now, Paul develops a more explicit 'doctrine of predestination'. In Rom 9,1ff he begins a new paragraph which mainly deals with the 'problem of Israel'.

Already before he has used several times the expression Ἰουδαῖοι τε πρῶτον καὶ Ἕλληνι (e.g. 1,16f; 2,9ff), and he has contrasted the Ἰουδαῖοι to Ἕλληνες, too (cf. 3,9). In 2,17-28, 3,1ff.29 Paul talked about the advantages of the Jews. Therefore the question arises: how does Paul cope with the problem of the 'unbelieving Israel'? is it possible that Israel has lost all its advantages? can it be that all its promises have become worthless?

And there is also another problem: If Paul understands HIS GOSPEL as δύναμις θεοῦ ... εἰς σωτηρίαν, why is it not such a Divine power for the Jews, who obviously reject this gospel and remain in the state of unbelievers?

These are the questions, Paul is facing, and he tries to answer them in Rom 9-11.

With striking emphasis and solemnity he "... declares his own sorrow at his fellow-Jews' unbelief and the strength of his desire for their conversion" in vv1-5²¹⁰. He assures the readers that the privileges of Israel - v4f - have not become invalid, but still remain in force. Then he continues his argument, and he works out some further aspects of 'predestination'.

5.11 The Text and its Structure

The Text is:

- 9,6 "But it is not that the word of God had failed.
 For neither all who are Israel are Israel
 9,7 nor because they are Abraham's descendants are they all
 his children,
 but "in Isaac your descendants will be called".
 9,8 This means that
 not the children of the flesh are God's children,
 but the children of the promise are reckoned as
 descendants.
 9,9 For a (word of) promise is this word:
 "About this time I will return, and Sarah shall have a son".

 9,10 Not only (in) this (case), but also Rebecca,
 who only conceived by one and the same man, Isaac, our
 father,
 9,11 for when they were not yet born
 and had done nothing either good or bad,
 in order that God's electing purpose might stand,
 9,12 not because of works
 but because of his call,
 she was told: "the elder will serve the younger",
 9,13 as it is written:
 "Jacob I loved,
 but Esau I hated".

The structure of this text can be analysed as the following: v6a is the link between v1-5 and v6-13, and it also contains the main thesis for the following discussion which Paul develops in two parallel but climactic circles of argumentation.

These are to be found in a) vv6b-9, and b) in vv10-13.

Both are similarly constructed:

1. Paul mentions the historical fact that only one of the two children is the elect one (v7.10);
2. the next step gives the reason for such an election (vv8.11-12a); and

²¹⁰Cranfield, Romans II, p.45 contra Barrett, Romans, p.175 who interprets this as disappointment and bitterness.

3. Paul quotes God's promise in order to show that this election is valid and has come into force (vv9.12b-13)²¹¹.

5.12 The Exegesis

v6a answers the questions which are to be seen in the background of this chapter, and his answer is a straightforward one with great assertiveness.

There is absolutely no question of assuming that the promises of God had failed. Moreover, there is not the slightest possibility for supposing that Jesus is not the Messiah. "The word of God had not failed"; this is Paul's general theme, his categorical statement for all the following expositions. This sentence is the foundation on which he establishes his argument.

Οὐχ οἶον δὲ ὅτι is an ellipsis²¹², and consists of the two idioms οὐχ οἶον and οὐχ ὅτι. The use of this expression serves to emphasize the definite character of this thesis, and without hesitation he says that the λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ has an unequivocal character.

Λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ reminds us of Rom 3,2 - the λόγια τοῦ θεοῦ - where Paul used this expression to demonstrate the privileges of the Jews. The λόγια are either the "statutes and ordinances", i.e. the law; or they are the "promises" which were given to the fathers and forefathers of Israel.

This Divine word, however, "did not fail", ἐκπέπτωκεν (perfect tense!), it "was not unsuccessful". It brought forth the desired result! This means that God's word "... noch ergeht, noch kräftig und wirksam ist"²¹³.

This is the meaning of the thematic sentence, and now Paul tries to give reasons for the truth of this statement, for its truth even if the reality seems to contradict it.

vv6b-9 contain the first argument, and it is a very surprising one. Paul begins with the observation that "not all who are of Israel are Israel".

Paul distinguishes between "Israel" and "Israel". Such a distinction must have been a provocative idea for the Jewish people because everyone who belongs to "Israel" by his physical origins, or by the sign of the covenant, i.e. the circumcision, is by definition a representative of the "true Israel".

²¹¹Cf. Wilckens, RömerII, p.191

²¹²Cf. BDR §§ 480(6); 304(4); and Bauer, Wörterbuch, col.1114

²¹³Schlier, Römer, p.290

But Paul makes a distinction by saying that there is a difference between οἱ ἐξ Ἰσραήλ and Ἰσραήλ²¹⁴. Paul qualifies this observation and says that "not all" belong to the "true Israel". This thesis has to be substantiated, and the apostle carries on his argument by giving an example from the very beginning of Israel.

Abraham and his sons serve as a first example. In a parallel structured sentence (v6b.7a) Paul says that "although" all of Israel "are Abraham's descendants, they are not all his children". The parallel links are:

v6b οὐ γὰρ πάντες οἱ ἐξ Ἰσραήλ οὗτοι Ἰσραήλ.

v7a οὐδ' ὅτι εἰσὶν σπέρμα Ἀβραάμ πάντες τέκνα;

and these statements are in strong contrast to each other.

The analysis shows that there is no possibility of giving the same qualities to οἱ ἐξ Ἰσραήλ and Ἰσραήλ. They are completely distinct from one another, and as a kind of substantiation he now uses an Old-Testament-quotation: "in Isaac your descendants will be called". With the help of this citation from LXX Gen 21,12, Paul says that there exists an election, a call which transforms the descendant into a child.

Κληθήσεται is a *'passivum divinum'*, and it indicates that "... nur durch eine je besondere Berufung durch Gott (pass. divinum, vgl. V.12), der faktische 'Same Abrahams' zum 'Samen' im Sinne der an Abraham ergangenen Verheißung, zum Kind Abrahams, das an dessen Erwählung teilhat (wird)"²¹⁵.

Out of the historical fact that God called Isaac, and not Ishmael, Paul draws the conclusion that Israel's history is a history of ELECTION already in its very beginning. We have to realize that Paul is here talking about one of the most important aspects of theology. He puts God's election in a historical context, and so he is talking - right from the beginning of his argument - about the aspect of history. The fact that God elects is not due to an abstract and philosophical idea of God, and it is also not due to a developed and sophisticated theory of knowledge of God, but it is due to Paul's awareness and realization that the God he is talking about is an active, a living and loving God. As such a God He is also an electing God right from the beginning in Israel's history.

²¹⁴ The reading of Ἰσραηλῖται in the mss D.F.G.614.629.1881.pc.vg^{ww} instead of the second Ἰσραήλ can be interpreted as a "Verdeutlichung" (Käsemann, Römer, p.252). The reading of N.A.²⁶ should be preferred because it is the 'lectio brevior' and 'lectio difficilior'.

²¹⁵ Wilckens, RömerII, p.192

ISRAEL'S HISTORY TAUGHT PAUL THAT ISRAEL'S GOD is AN ELECTING GOD, and God's election always took place in Israel's history. This insight and realization is more than an abstract knowledge because this insight teaches man that history is the dimension in which GOD encounters and elects man. So election and the aspect of history are closely connected.

Therefore Paul is able to continue his argument that "not the children of the flesh are God's children, but the children of the promise are reckoned as descendants". This is the result of the first circle of argument.

- v8 sets out plainly what has been already indicated in the first distinction (v7).

In the antithesis of σάρξ and ἐπαγγελία lies the core of his argument, i.e. not the natural descent - and of course: Isaac and Ishmael were both a natural offspring of Abraham -, but only the promise of God, ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ (v6a) transforms the natural seed into a child of God. Because of the fact that Isaac was the subject of the Divine promise to Abraham, he became the select descendant.

- v9 contains a scriptural argument. It is a quotation from LXX Gen 18,10,14: "about this time I will return, and Sarah shall have a son".

This promise marks the unexpected beginning of Abraham's seed. It is a word of God, and it appoints the true child of the promise.

As a conclusion we might say that in this context Paul stresses the importance and the effectiveness of God's word which creates what it says. God's word, His ἐπαγγελία, as Paul understands Gen 18,10,14 is such an effective and creative word. And this "... Verheißung (kann) nicht immanent weitergegeben und gleichsam leiblich fortgepflanzt werden (...), sondern (muß) immer neu zugesprochen und bewährt werden (...)"²¹⁶.

In the context of the Jews of Paul's time, and also in the context of Christianity of today, this idea is radical and provocative because it claims that there is no security in belonging to the chosen people - neither in Jewish society, nor in the Christian church - just because of descent or birth. Trust in external signs is worth nothing. Everything is dependent on God's election, on His calling and choice. Such a conviction puts into question the basis of all our churches because they all trust either in their tradition, or in their support by the state, or in their political and social influence and power.

²¹⁶Käsemann, Römer, p.253

Many of today's churches recruit their members by infant-baptism and confirmation, other churches lay stress on a personal conversion and decision. But to depend totally on God's election as well as on His CALLING: this is not often accentuated and heard. A church of today which is "... protected by the state, safeguarded by institutions, secured by legacies, continued by the birth of babies, cannot be living by faith"²¹⁷.

The danger of such a shift of emphasis is that the church is no longer the creation of God who CALLS and ELECTS His people but becomes a construction of human activities and in the end it served human wishes and desires for security and independence from God.

But Paul does not stop his argument at this point. He continues, and his second example sharpens and intensifies the first one²¹⁸.

vv10-13 Paul begins the second circle of argumentation with οὐ μόνον δέ, which is a "Brachylogie"²¹⁹ - i.e. a very short and incomplete phrase.

We may paraphrase it with: "not only in Sarah's case". The point of such an incomplete sentence is that "... das Anakoluth eine Aussage von großem theologischen Gewicht anzeigt"²²⁰.

The apostle continues in the same vein as his first example, by taking another central figure of Israel's early beginning. "REBECCA", the wife of Isaac, conceived only by him the TWINS Jacob and Esau.

There is only one woman, Rebecca, and not as in the example before the two women; and there is only one man, Isaac, "our father"; and there are TWINS!

These presuppositions clearly show that the second illustration is free from every weakness which could have been raised as an objection to the first one.

In addition these twins "were still unborn and had not done anything good or bad". The last premise is the most important one because now Paul is able to show that God's will is free and independent of every human merit.

The situation Paul is referring to elucidates that God cannot be conditioned by our human activities or merits.

²¹⁷Jocz, Theology of Election, p.21

²¹⁸Cf. Kuss, RömerIII, p.705: "Aber dem ersten Beispiel fügt er sogleich ein zweites an, und das verstärkt seinen Beweis in mannigfacher Hinsicht".

²¹⁹BDR § 479(1)

²²⁰Käsemann, Römer, p.254

There is nothing which could make us worthier, or which would aid and abet our opportunities of becoming an elect. We cannot do anything to influence God's action and election, we cannot offer God good and advantageous conditions.

GOD is, and He remains GOD, by executing His independence and His free will. GOD elects - as Paul described - already before a human being is born. This shows the human powerlessness and impossibility, but at the same moment it shows God's power and His possibilities.

The parenthesis - v11b.12a - which is the centre of this passage shows this immediately. It indicates the purpose of Paul's argument, and introduces a final clause. Its goal is "that God's electing purpose might stand".

Πρόθεσις reminds the reader of Rom 8,28, where Paul talked about God's purpose, but in this context we have to understand it as "... die allem zuvor ergehende Setzung, die Gott vornimmt, also eher das Vornehmen Gottes als Tat und nicht so sehr sein Entschluß oder Ratschluß"²²¹.

This explanation fits perfectly well into the context of v10.11a, when the apostle speaks about God's choosing, which occurs independent of every human action. The twins have done nothing, neither "good" nor "bad"; and they were still unborn. But nevertheless their destiny was already decided because God had the aim of letting His purpose triumph over human effort. God's purpose is carried out by His "election", ἡ ἐκλογή, a term which occurs here for the first time in Romans.

The circumstances described in v10.11a show clearly that there is a totally independent choice by God. He elects whom He wants to elect, in order that His election may be a permanent and lasting one (μενῆ). The occurrence of His election has the connotation of "... standing firm, being accomplished, not failing", and it presents "... the opposite to ἐκπίπτω in v6. God's distinguishing Jacob from Esau before they were born was a step forward to the ultimate triumphant fulfilment of His saving purpose"²²².

Although the parenthesis should have been sufficient in this context, Paul extends it by saying "not because of works but because of his call". The fact that the apostle expounds v11b with v12a shows the importance of the idea of election and predestination in this context, but it is somehow also the logical consequence of v11a.

²²¹Schlier, Römer, p.292

²²²Cranfield, Romans II, p.478

Οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων denies absolutely the merit of any work which could foster or support God's election. However, this election stands firm because it is based on God's independent call. He, God, calls and elects, and His call and election is steady and unshakable.

Ἐκ τοῦ καλοῦντος recalls Rom 4,17 where God was described as ὁ καλῶν. In 4,17 Paul stressed God's freedom to "call into existence the things that do not exist" (RSV). "Gott handelt wie in der Schöpfung auch geschichtlich als Rufender und Berufender am Menschen. Die Antithese verdeutlicht, daß er es als der Alleinwirksame tut, wenn es um Heil geht. Werden so ... die Schemata der Rechtfertigungslehre ... in den Kontext eingetragen, beweist das wie wenig Pls. das Thema von c.9-11 im Briefganzen isoliert wissen will"²²³.

Τοῦ καλοῦντος then indicates that God's "... election is wholly dependent on God Himself who calls. The divine call is that which gives effect to the divine election"²²⁴.

A citation from LXX Gen 25,23 which is introduced with ἐρρέθη (like κληθήσεται a 'passivum divinum') then serves as a substantiation. It is God who spoke this foreshadowing word to Rebecca, and this word stands against every rule of a line of succession when it says that "the elder will serve the younger". This quotation supports Paul's argumentation of God's sovereign election, and as a consequence of this He is able to act against the human rules of succession, and to tell the older son that he will serve the younger brother.

By adding a second quotation from LXX Mal 1,2f he uses a form which corresponds to the tradition known from later Rabbinic writings. They sometimes argue "... mit einer Kombination von Tora und Propheten"²²⁵.

Καθὼς γέγραπται²²⁶, "as it is written: Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated". This quotation has been torn out of its context, and in using it in this train of thought, Paul also changes the character of Jacob and Esau as historical persons.

²²³Käsemann, Römer, p.254

²²⁴Cranfield, Romans II, p.478f

²²⁵Käsemann, Römer, p.255

²²⁶Καθὼς is disputed on textcritical grounds. N²¹.B. use καθάπερ whereas P⁴⁶.N.A.D.F.G.Ψ.Μ.N.A.²⁶ read καθὼς. The decision as to which is original is difficult to make because elsewhere Paul uses καθάπερ as an introduction for a quotation; cf. Rom 3,4. There καθάπερ has the better attestation. In this case we may read καθὼς because the attestation is excellent, and the sense would not change with either reading. Both conjunctions are used by Paul to introduce a quotation.

They are now turned into representatives and archetypes of a nation, and this gives Paul's argumentation a new quality, a new hitherto unknown sharpness.

If we then try to connect v12b with v6b, v6b becomes a very strong statement because then Paul is talking about a demarcation-line within a population of the same past, the same tradition, the same belief, the same foundations, but - and this is Paul's distinctive idea - nevertheless with a deep gap between them. And this gap is neither evoked by human works (v11), nor by different origins (v10) but only by God's love and God's hatred.

This is the CLIMAX of the argument in v6-13, and the result is: God's free love. His ἀγαπάω creates the common peaceful relation between God and man, and God's hatred. His μισέω creates the dreadful distance between Himself and mankind. This distinction between "love" and "hatred" is not bridged by Paul, and so "... the love of God is the mystery of His election; His hate is the enigma of His hardening"²²⁷.

5.13 An Interim-Conclusion

As some kind of conclusion we may set out the following observations:

5.13.1 For the first time in Romans Paul utters a strong predestinarian thought.

He even uses the pattern of a '*praedestinatio gemina*'²²⁸, "... jedoch nicht in kosmologischem, sondern in heilsgeschichtlichem Sinn, nämlich um die völlige, absolute Freiheit herauszustellen, in der Gott innerhalb der Geschichte der Welt die Geschichte seines erwählten Volkes konstituiert - und voranführt"²²⁹.

Usually the '*praedestinatio gemina*', the 'teaching of election and reprobation' evokes the human protest like the reproach that God is no longer a loving God (cf. Jn 3,16), but an unjust God who acts in an arbitrary and autocratic way. However, such an objection does not do justice to God's being GOD, to His being the CREATOR on the one hand, and does not realize that there is "election" in human every-day life on the other hand.

When Paul makes use of the pattern of a '*praedestinatio gemina*' he used the verbs "to hate" and "to love", and there arises the question whether we - when we only love one person - are not also electing in nearly the same way as God does?

²²⁷Michel, art. μισέω κτλ, p.695_{13f}

²²⁸Cf. Käsemann, Römer, p.256; Dinkler, Prädestination, p.92

²²⁹Wilckens, RömerII, p.195f

"Love" and "hate", however, are always affections that take place in 'time and space', which happen in our world and in our time. Therefore, "predestination" is not an abstract idea but "predestination" when it is characterized by "love" and "hate" can only be found out in the actual situation of real life.

There is, of course, a danger which we have to fight: this is the danger that people want to decide and judge about the question of who is predestined for good or bad.

A statement, however, of "who is predestined, either for "good" or "bad" is exclusively GOD'S STATEMENT, not ours!

- 5.13.2 This pattern of a '*praedestinatio gemina*' in our text, however, does not allow abstract debates about God's free will, or His foreknowledge, His '*praescientia*'.

Paul uses these patterns

- firstly on the basis of real and historical persons in the history of Israel, i.e.: there is the fact that God is actually electing people; and

- secondly this election is strictly connected with God's WORD, and this WORD is in strong contrast to any idea of an absolute '*praescientia*'.

God's word is issued in our world and in our history, and it is issued to concrete people. But this Divine WORD, His CALL "... konstituiert im Raum der Geschichte Annahme wie Ablehnung", and in this word God proves Himself as Creator and Judge²³⁰.

5.2 ROMANS 9,24-26

5.20 The Argumentation in 9,14-23

Rom 9-11 form an integrated whole. It seems therefore advisable to follow the whole train of thought.

In Rom 9,14-23 Paul continues his argument quoting an opponent's objection. He repeats the question whether there is "injustice in God's part", and he repudiates it immediately.

Then his discussion takes on a new direction by adding the element of "MERCY".

In 9,6-13 he only spoke about God's call - καλέω, ἐκλογή, τοῦ καλοῦντος - but now he also talks, and this for the first time in this letter about God's "mercy": ἐλεέω, ἔλεος κτλ.

²³⁰Käsemann, Römer, p.256 (Partly own translation, HHi)

In v16 he draws the conclusion that it never ever depends on "man's will or exertion, but upon God's mercy" (RSV).

This conclusion is immediately illustrated with an example taken from Israel's "Exodus-experience". As a result of this experience, Paul draws the conclusion that God in His free will has "mercy upon whomever he wills (i.e. Moses), and he hardens the heart of whomever he wills" (i.e. the Pharaoh; v18;RSV).

So, in 9,6-18 Paul used three similarly structured arguments to describe God's free calling, His free mercy, and each time we have to bear in mind that he thinks of predestination as an event in concreto, and that he does not reflect about it in abstracto. Paul does not speculate about an abstract and absolute free will as a possibility and ability of God's character. Instead of this he knows that GOD'S FREE WILL will be realized by HIS ELECTION and CHOICE in 'world and history'.

Another objection forces Paul to continue his argument, and this time the objector blames God Himself for His free will and His mercy: "WHO can resist His will?" (v19;RSV).

The apostle does not accept this counter-argument. Instead, he shows by a clear and illustrative example that man does not have any claims on God's mercy: the potter has every right to do with the clay what he wants to do²³¹, and because God is the CREATOR, the MAKER of HEAVEN and EARTH, He can do with His creation whatever He wants to do. "Der Mensch kann nicht Gottes Ankläger werden, weil es Recht für die Kreatur nicht als neutrale Norm, sondern nur durch Gott selbst gibt, und dessen Recht mit seiner schöpferischen Freiheit zusammenfällt"²³².

This is expressed in v21, and Paul puts it in the form of a rhetorical question which leads up to v22f. These verses are in some way a summary of the whole preceding discussion. Paul establishes the fact that there are "vessels of wrath made for destruction" (RSV), and "vessels of mercy" (RSV). However, the centre of these verses is that God "endured" - ἡνεγκεν - with much patience the vessels of wrath. In His endurance he showed "the riches of His glory", and "... das ist nicht nur darum die Hauptaussage in v.22, weil ἡνεγκεν hier das Hauptverbum ist, sondern vor allem darum, weil eben an dieses ἡνεγκεν der Satz v.23 angeknüpft wird. Gott trug die Einen, um durch die Anderen den Reichtum seiner Herrlichkeit zu offenbaren"²³³.

²³¹Schlatter, Gottes Gerechtigkeit, p.303: "Da das Geschirr alles, was es ist, vom Töpfer empfängt und nichts aus sich selber, hat es keinen Anspruch an den Töpfer. Einen Bruch des Rechts, ἀδικία, gibt es im Verhältnis des Töpfers zu seinem Gebilde nicht".

²³²Käsemann, Römer, p.260; similarly Michel, Römer, p.312

²³³Barth, KDII₂, p.248

Once more we realize that Paul talks about a *'praedestinatio gemina'*; moreover here he seems to talk about an eternal double predestination which is expressed in the aorists *κατηρτισμένα* and *προητοίμασεν*.

5.21 The Text and Its Structure

But Paul does not stop, he continues:

9,24 "Those, whom he has also called (namely) us,
not only from the Jews
but also from the Gentiles,

9,25 as he says in Hosea:

"I will call the 'Not-my-people' 'My people',
and the 'Not-beloved' 'Beloved';

9,26 and it will be
instead of their being told 'you are not my people'
they shall be called 'Sons of the living God'."

One preliminary remark should be made:

Although the train of thought continues to v29, we have limited the passage in the context of our thesis to the vv24-26 because of two reasons:

(1) Paul only uses in v24-26 the terminology of "election" or "calling", like the verb *καλέω*, and therefore

(2) only these verses refer directly to our topic of God's calling His people out of Jews and Gentiles.

The vv27-29 deal with the problem of a 'remnant-Israel'.

Another problem of this text is its structure. N²¹ prints v22-24 as one long sentence which end with a question-mark after *καὶ ἐξ ἔθνων* (v24). N²¹'s textcritical apparatus, however, offers also the division of the text with a question-mark at the end of v23, and begins a new sentence in v24. This division has been taken on by N.A.²⁶, and we follow this structural division. One reason for doing this is that v24 has got the character of a personal confession of faith²³⁴.

Another reason is the following structural analysis of vv24-26(29), and this analysis might be helpful for our interpretation afterwards:

v24; the phrase *οὓς καὶ ἐκάλεσεν ἡμᾶς* is the introductory sentence for the following exposition, which consists

- A) of *οὐ μόνον ἐξ Ἰουδαίων*
and
- B) of *ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐξ ἔθνων*.

²³⁴Cf. Calvin, *Romans*, p.370; Käsemann, *Römer*, p.263

Contra: Cranfield, *Romans II*, p.497; Michel, *Römer*, p.316; Barrett, *Romans*, p.189

A) and B) contain the key-words for the following quotations: Ἰουδαῖοι and ἔθνος.

v25f looks upon the Gentiles - B) - who are identified as τὸν οὐ λαόν μου.

v27f handles the question of Israel - A) - as v27a clearly indicates: ὑπὲρ τοῦ Ἰσραήλ.

v29 gives a final statement which praises God for Israel's survival - A).

So, the whole passage has a chiastic structure:

v24 A ————— B
 v25f B ————— A
 v27ff ————— A.

This structural analysis shows us how carefully Paul ordered his thoughts, and how skilfully he used the quotations in order to support his opinion.

5.22 The Exegesis

v24 contains a shift of emphasis within this whole section. Paul no longer discusses objections and problems, but instead expresses his ideas in some kind of confession.

If we appreciate this, then the personal pronoun ἡμᾶς becomes quite important, and is not merely "... slipped in"²³⁵. Paul says in this confession that there are amongst those "vessels of mercy" not only the Jews, but also the Gentiles.

Again, Paul does not grow weary of emphasizing that God is the One who has called His people, and that He has called them out of the Jews as well as out of the Gentiles. So Paul describes with this sentence GOD's absolute FREEDOM and LIBERTY to elect His people in 'world and history', and it does not matter whether they are of Jewish or Gentile origin.

Paul knows precisely that "... er etwas Umstürzendes und etwas Israel, seine Brüder dem Fleisch nach, Entsetzendes sagte und sagen mußte"²³⁶. And yet, this statement is not a sophisticated speculation about how GOD formed and forms His FREE WILL in His eternity, but instead it reflects his experiences as a missionary: there are Gentiles who believe in the gospel he is preaching, and this coming to faith makes manifest the election and predestination of God.

Nevertheless, it is very important to acknowledge that Paul puts emphasis on both groups: Jews and Gentiles, both are called, and this "... wirft ... in die Vergangenheit und in die Gegenwart Israels nicht neue Schatten, sondern neues überlegenes Licht"²³⁷.

²³⁵Contra Cranfield, Romans II, p.498

²³⁶Schlier, Römer, p.303

In the following verses Paul tries to prove his very provocative ideas with a collection of quotations from the Old-Testament-prophets, in this case from Hosea.

- v25 The citation-formula ὡς καὶ ἐν ... λέγει introduces the quotation. The subject of λέγει is God, who is also the subject of this whole section, cf. e.g. ἐκάλεσεν.

Paul quotes Hos 2,25 but this text differs from the LXX in some respects:

- (1) Paul used 'his verb' καλέω instead of λέγω (LXX).
- (2) He replaced ἐλεέω (LXX) with ἀγαπάω, and
- (3) he reordered the members of this synthetical 'parallelismus membrorum'.

However, we will interpret the quotation in direct dependence on v24: ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐξ ἔθνων are the last words of v24, and the Hosea-quotations refer to these ἔθνη. The Gentiles are the 'Not-my-people' which God "will call", καλέσω, "his people". As some kind of intensification, and this is the reason why Paul reordered this 'parallelismus membrorum', these 'Not-my-people' were also the 'Not-beloved', but through His call they became the "Beloved". This last aspect bears the whole emphasis, and intensifies Paul's argument.

God calls the 'Not-my-people' to be 'His people', and so He appoints them to a fundamentally new relationship with Him. But this relationship is 'only' the basis for the Gentiles' transformation from the 'Not-beloved' to the "Beloved", and this relationship is a deeper one.

- v26, however, is a precise quotation from LXX Hos 2,1b, and again we have antithetical elements in this text:

| v26a.b. | v26c |
|----------------------|------------------|
| 1. ἐν τῷ τόπῳ οὗ | ἐκεῖ |
| 2. ἐρρέθη αὐτοῖς | κληθήσονται |
| 3. οὐ λαός μου ὑμεῖς | υἱοὶ θεοῦ ζῶντος |

- ad 1. The first antithesis is marked by the pronominal adverbs which may be properly translated with "in that place where", and "there". In our translation, however, we were not able to 'reproduce' this antithesis.

- ad 2. and 3. Each verb is a 'passivum divinum', but at one stage God told the Gentiles, ἐρρέθη αὐτοῖς, that they are not His people. Now they "are called", κληθήσονται, by Him "Sons of the living God". This term is a title which was used exclusively for Israel.

But now it is extended to the Gentiles; "... sie sind durch den Gottesruf 'mein Volk' und 'Geliebte' und 'Söhne des lebendigen Gottes', und zwar anstelle Israels"²³⁸.

This is the transformation of the Gentiles. This transformation is to be fulfilled by God's word, and καλέω seems to be the leitmotif in the vv24-26:

1. ἐκάλεισεν (aorist) is the voice of a confession which confesses a God who called, who is calling, and who will be calling.
2. καλέσω (future tense) is a 'futurum propheticum', and "... Gott kündigt durch den Propheten die Berufung der Heiden an, die sich jetzt verwirklicht hat"²³⁹.
3. κληθήσονται (future tense, 'passivum divinum'): It describes God's activity for the benefit of the Gentiles who became God's people because "... er hat es ihnen jetzt durch seinen schöpferischen Ruf zugesprochen. Die Nicht-Geliebten als die Nicht-Erwählten (vgl V.13) sind dadurch zu Geliebten, zu seinen Erwählten geworden. Das Zitat aus Hos 2,1 in V.26 präzisiert und steigert"²⁴⁰.

In this line of argumentation - v24-6 - it is always necessary to realize that God is the One who acts in His creative and creating word. At every stage Paul wants to demonstrate God's freedom because He is the Creator, and everybody is dependent on the wonder of His mercy which transforms godless human beings into His Beloved ones.

One final remark should be made on the apostle's remarkable independence in using Old-Testament texts. These passages from Hos 2 are usually applied to Israel, and they are regarded as promises for Israel. But Paul interprets them in a radically different way. He understands them as a promise to those Gentiles who became Christians through his missionary labour. This Pauline interpretation is challenging, and a contradiction to the Jewish understanding. So we may conclude that "... der eigentliche Angriff auf das Judentum ... im Schriftzitat (liegt)"²⁴¹.

5.23 A Short Conclusion

After Paul has rejected (in v14) that there is injustice on God's part, he develops his ideas with the new 'element' of God's MERCY, and by His sovereign MERCY God effectively called the Gentiles to be His people.

²³⁸Schlier, Römer, p.304

²³⁹Wilckens, RömerII, p.206

²⁴⁰Wilckens, RömerII, p.206

²⁴¹Michel, Römer, p.371

Here again, we find that Paul is discussing God's free will but he adds MERCY as a further characteristic of God. Mercy, however, is granted by God in a free and independent way, and God's way of bestowing His mercy on men is illustrated by describing God as a potter: the potter has the opportunity of making "out of the same lump" different vessels for different purposes: "one vessel for beauty and another for menial use" (9,21;RSV).

Furthermore, it is even a sign of God's patience when He endured "the vessels of wrath made for destruction in order to make known the riches of his glory for the vessels of mercy which he has prepared beforehand for glory" (9,22f;RSV).

In these verses Paul talks 'expressis verbis' about GOD's BEING GOD because of GOD's BEING THE CREATOR. This characteristic of God gives Him the right to do with His creation what He wants to do.

Paul interprets the present situation of Israel as a "... Wirkung der Schöpfermacht und des Schöpferrechts Gottes an seinem Volk. Beides bekundet sich, wenn Gott die σκεύη ὀργῆς, dh. den Großteil Israels verwirft, und die σκεύη ἐλέους, dh. die Kirche aus Juden und Heiden, beruft (V.24)"²⁴².

This statement had to be proved, and Paul proves it with quotations from Hos 2 which he, in radical manner, refers to the Gentiles. Paul could do this because the Gentiles were these 'Non-people' from the Jewish viewpoint, and they became - here, Paul reflects his experiences as a missionary - 'Sons of the living God' by the calling of this God.

With regard to Israel, however, Paul is convinced that there is only a remnant which will be saved. But even this remnant is totally dependent on God's grace and mercy, and beforehand there will be the execution of God's "sentence upon the earth with rigour and despatch" (v28;RSV). So it is correct that "... der alttestamentliche Beweisgang schärfer (ist) als die These, um derentwillen er angeführt wurde; er spricht ausdrücklich von dem Strafgericht Gottes über Israel"²⁴³.

5.3 ROMANS 11,1-8

5.30 The Context

We will briefly outline the context of Rom 9,30-10,21.

Rom 9,30-33 is a summary of the apostle's thoughts: God's grace and mercy made these 'Non-people', the Gentiles to those who did 'not pursue righteousness but have attained it' (cf. v30). The Jews, however, did not attain God's righteousness because they pursued their own righteousness in fulfilling the law, i.e. by works.

²⁴²Müller, Gottes Gerechtigkeit, p.32

²⁴³Michel, Römer, p.319

There we find Paul's main antithesis: δικαιοσύνη ἐκ πίστεως and δικαιοσύνη ἐξ ἔργων.

Rom 10,1-4: The Jewish zeal for God is in vain. They cannot perceive that "Christ is the end of the law". Rom 10,4 - the centre of Paul's argument in chapter 10 - is proved in v5-13 with scriptural arguments from Torah - Lev and Deut -, Nebiim - Is and Joel -, and Ketubim - the Psalms.

Righteousness which is based on doing the commandments can never be attained. For the apostle, the only way to salvation - for the Greek as well as for the Jew - is marked by the confession "with your lips that Jesus is Lord", and the belief "in your heart that God raised him from the dead" (v9). The salvation is certain when they "call upon the name of the Lord".

This gives the cue for the questions which are raised in Rom 10,14ff. These questions are arranged in "... der kunstvollen Stilform des rückläufigen Kettenschlusses"²⁴⁴. In this sorites Paul goes back to the absolute beginnings of his missionary works, i.e. the preaching which is, and will be done. But this proclamation is sometimes in vain because "they have not obeyed the gospel". "To obey", ὑπακούω, is the essential action because "the faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ" (v17;RSV).

The apostle emphasizes that the preaching is performed up "to the ends of the world" (v18, plus a scriptural argument from LXX Ps 18,5). Yet, Israel was disobedient to God's word (v21), and so God has "been found by those who did not seek" Him (v20) with the purpose of making Israel 'jealous' and 'angry' (v19).

ISRAEL's disobedience to the proclamation of God's δικαιοσύνη ἐκ πίστεως in Christ Jesus, and her insisting on the Torah as its way of becoming righteous before God is Israel's sin, her guilt. But this guilt is not only "... ein Versagen, sondern Ablehnung des nahen Wortes. Prädestination charakterisiert in diesem Zusammenhang nicht Gottes Wesen und Eigenschaften, sondern sein Handeln mit seiner Schöpfung, über dem es für Menschen zu Heil und Unheil kommt. Denn beide gibt es nur in der Begegnung mit dem Wort, nicht als von uns selbst zu verwirklichende Möglichkeiten"²⁴⁵.

5.31 The Text

Israel's guilt is characterized by her disobedience, and Paul reacts again to an objection:

11,1 "Do I say then that God has repudiated his people?

Never!

²⁴⁴Käsemann, Römer, p.283; similarly: Michel, Römer, p.333

²⁴⁵Käsemann, Römer, p.288

- For I myself am an Israelite,
 out of Abraham's descendants,
 of Benjamin's tribe.
- 11,2 (No!) God has not repudiated his people whom he foreknew.
 Or do you not know what the scripture says of Elijah,
 how he appealed to God against Israel?
- 11,3 'Lord, your prophets they have killed,
 your altars they have torn down,
 and I alone am left and they seek my life'.
- 11,4 But what does the divine answer say to him?
 'I have kept for myself seven thousand men who have not bent
 the knee before Baal'.
- 11,5 Like this it is in the present time,
 there, too, is a remnant according to the election of grace;
- 11,6 (but) if it is by grace, then (it is) not by works,
 for otherwise the grace would no longer be grace.
- 11,7 What now?
 What Israel is striving for it did not obtain,
 but the elect obtained it;
 the rest, however, was hardened;
- 11,8 as it is written:
 'God gave them a spirit of stupor,
 eyes that should not see,
 ears that should not hear,
 until this very day'."²⁴⁶

5.32 The Exegesis

- v1 λέγω οὖν begins a new train of thought and introduces a
 "rhetorical question"²⁴⁷.

It asks whether "God has repudiated his people" because this seems to be the logical consequence of Paul's previous argument. Moreover, the fact of believing Gentiles, and disobedient Jews seems to demand this conclusion!

The stylistic device of a rhetorical question implies already the answer. Here Paul gives it 'expressis verbis'. He repudiates the assumption which lies in such a question. He is convinced that "God has not repudiated his people".

²⁴⁶According to the topic of our thesis - "predestination - election" - the detailed exegesis ends with v8. This is the best place to stop because v8 contains the first scriptural argument which intensifies Paul's own thoughts. Vv9f do not add essentially new ideas. Nevertheless there will be a brief glance at these verses, too.

²⁴⁷Cf. Käsemann, Römer, p.289

Μὴ γένοιτο (cf. Rom 3,4.6.31; 6,2.15; 7,7.13; 9,14; 11,11) expresses also his indignation about such an idea. It is impossible that God will ever repudiate His people, this is a steadfast fact²⁴⁸.

The grounds for such a certainty that God's relationship to Israel endures is proved by Paul's own biography. He reckons himself as a Jew 'par excellence' because (1) he is an Israelite and belongs to the pure Israelite people; (2) he is ἐκ σπέρματος Ἀβραάμ; and (3) he belongs to the "tribe of Benjamin"²⁴⁹. Paul is a Jew without blemish in his descent, and therefore he can use his own biography as a proof for his conviction that "God has not repudiated his people".

Additionally there is a second aspect of his existence which becomes eminently important in this context. He is not only a true Jew, but on top of that he is "a called apostle εἰς εὐαγγέλιον θεοῦ" (cf. Rom 1,1). Thus, if God had repudiated Israel, Paul would have been the first who would have been repudiated, who would have been cast off from the Gospel. His office as well as his task would have become a matter of impossibility. Yet, the actual fact is, that Paul is God's "called and chosen apostle".

So Paul is involved with his whole being, with his entire existence, in this proof. "Das ist der entscheidende Sinn dieser 'existentiellen Begründung', jenes 'Unmöglich'. ... In seiner eigenen Person, sofern diese Träger des Apostelamtes ist, sieht Paulus ja sein Volk, sieht er Israel nicht nur passiv, sondern aktiv beteiligt an dem Werk des auferstandenen Christus"²⁵⁰.

To preach as a Jew God's gospel to the Gentiles makes him the archetype for the fact that God has not cast off His people, and so here he gives an argument "... a minori ad maius"²⁵¹.

- v2 v2a repeats v1a and quotes LXX 1Sam 12,22 with the difference that Paul has changed the tenses of the verb: instead of ἀπώσεται in the LXX, he uses the aorist ἀπόσατο.

²⁴⁸Cf. Althaus, Römer, p.112: "Es ist ein Unterschied, ob man Gottes Erbarmen wie einen Anspruch des Menschen ihm gegenüber geltend macht; oder ob man sich erst vor seiner Freiheit, kraft deren er Israel nichts schuldig ist, gebeugt und die Schuld Israels bekannt hat und nun erst das Wort von seiner Treue sich gesagt sein läßt".

²⁴⁹Schlier's emphasis on this particular characteristic feature seems questionable to me. See: Römer, p.322: "... damit zu dem Stamm gehörig, in dem das Fortbestehen Gesamtisraels garantiert ist -...".

Similarly: Michel, Römer, p.329

²⁵⁰Barth, KDII₂, p.295

²⁵¹Luther, Vorlesung, p.428₂₈₋₃₀ (Luther, Lectures, p.421): "statuit id, quod minus est, ut stare probet id, quod maius est, hoc est, arguit a minori ad maius. Quia si Deus repulisset plebem suam, maxime Apostolum Paulum repulisset, qui totis viribus contra Deum pugnavit".

Therefore, this quotation reaffirms via like "... a solemn and explicit denial"²⁵².

Significantly Paul adds *ὅν προέγνω*, and emphasizes that the non-carried-out-repudiation of Israel has its grounds in God's foreknowledge. The parallel text - Rom 8,29: *οὓς προέγνω, καὶ προώρισεν* - marks the beginning of a sorites about God's electing activity which ends with the being glorified by God. If this is relevant to our text, the *ὅν προέγνω* is another aspect of the certainty that God will never reject and repudiate His people²⁵³. This is the consolation as well as the confirmation which Paul gives in these verses.

However, it seems as if Paul does not dare to leave this 'hypothesis' without any further substantiation, and so he adds - similarly to 9,6.13.24-26 - some scriptural arguments which refer to the story of Elijah; *ἐν Ἡλίου*²⁵⁴. The citations are introduced in the style of diatribe: *ἢ οὐκ οἴδατε* reminds the congregation of a story which is already well-known²⁵⁵. The Christians in Rome should know how Elijah "appealed to God against Israel".

- v3 *Ἐντυγχάνω* means here "speaking to God in accusation of Israel"²⁵⁶; and Elijah accuses Israel 'of having killed God's prophets, of having torn down God's altars, and he alone was left and they seek his life'.

In comparison with the text in LXX 1Kings 19 we discover again a rearrangement in Paul's text. The text in LXX 1Kings 19,10.14 has the order:

*τὰ θυσιαστήριά σου κατέσκηψαν/ καθεῖλαν,
καὶ τοὺς προφήτας σου ἀπέκτειναν,
καὶ ὑπολέλειμμα ἐγὼ μονώτατος,
καὶ ζητοῦσιν τὴν ψυχὴν μου.*

But it is rather questionable to suspect any deeper theological reason for this order²⁵⁷. At any rate, this text conveys a fairly lonely and hopeless situation.

²⁵²Cranfield, RomansII, p.545; similarly: Michel, Römer, p.339

²⁵³Cf. Kuss, RömerIII, p.785: "... in (*ὅν προέγνω*) der offensichtlich an den Zusammenhang Röm 8,29.30 erinnert, wird Gottes konkurrenzlose Initiative hervorgehoben".

Similarly Schmidt, Römer, p.185: "*ὅν προέγνω* unterstreicht das αὐτοῦ: Gott verstößt sein Volk nicht, das er doch selbst erwählt hat; *προέγνω* (8,29) läßt an ein schöpferisches, prädestinierendes Erkennen Gottes denken, welches Israel die geschichtliche Bestimmung und Wirklichkeit gab, Gottes Volk zu sein".

²⁵⁴BDR § 219₁: "... in Zitationsformeln ist *ἐν* lokal", e.g. Rom 9,25.

²⁵⁵Cf. Käsemann, Römer, p.290

²⁵⁶Cranfield, RomansII, p.546

²⁵⁷As Michel, Römer, p.339 does in assuming that Paul's prime concern is the killing of the prophets.

There is no sign of hope left for those who believe in Israel's true and only God because to worship Him has become impossible since all the places of worship are destroyed.

Therefore, the situation as a whole seems to be the 'tertium comparationis' for Paul because Elijah's lamentation could also be Paul's lamentation about Israel. He is the only one who is left in his people²⁵⁸.

- v4 But God in His "divine answer", ὁ χρηματισμός ('hapax legomenon' in the New Testament), reacts to this lamentation with a consolation.

Κατέλιπον ἑμαυτῷ, "I have kept for myself seven thousand people", corresponds in some way to the phrase ὃν προέγνω in v2a, and so we have again a "... marvellous commendation for His grace and election" because "... this act of remaining was not the act of those who remained but of God who kept them"²⁵⁹. If we regard the "seven thousand people" symbolically, then God's answer is not just a consolation but also a first sign of hope because "seven thousand" is "... symbol of completeness, perfection"²⁶⁰.

However, it is God Alone who takes the initiative, and keeps those "seven thousand" for Himself who "did not bend the knee before the Baal". Κάμπτω γόνυ is a sign of religious devotion, and the feminine article in τῇ Βάαλ becomes understandable from the Jewish tendency to read αἰσχύνη instead of Βάαλ. This is rooted in Hos 9,10 where the Israelites read נשׁב (αἰσχύνη) in order not to pronounce the name לב (Βάαλ, cf. LXX 3Kings 18,19.25; Jer 3,24f)²⁶¹.

There exists a remnant which is left only by God's mercy, and this means that He does not abandon His own work²⁶². These "seven thousand" represent "... Israel als solches: sie und nicht die ungetreue Majorität! ... Indem Gott sie übrigbehält, hält er an Israel als solchem fest, ist darüber entschieden, daß er sein Volk nicht verstoßen hat"²⁶³.

- v5 utters Paul's personal conviction: as God has kept for Himself a remnant in the time of Elijah so He is also doing ἐν τῷ νῦν καιρῷ.

²⁵⁸Cf. Barth, KDII₂, p.297

²⁵⁹Luther, Lectures, p.421 (Luther, Vorlesung, p.429_{8ff});

similarly: Schlier, Römer, p.323: "κατέλιπον κτλ, also eine Kundgabe der gefallen Entscheidung Gottes".

²⁶⁰Cranfield, RomansII, p.547

²⁶¹Cf. BDR § 53,5₁₅

²⁶²Cf. Schlatter, Gottes Gerechtigkeit, p.319

²⁶³Barth, KDII₂, p.298

This is Paul's understanding of the scriptural argument; "today in my time there is also a remnant". Ἐν τῷ νῦν καιρῷ (cf. Rom 3,26) implies the "... eschatologische Gegenwart, die durch das Erscheinen der Gerechtigkeit Gottes im ἱλαστήριον Jesus Christus angebrochen ist und die verheißene prophetische Zeit (durch die Gegenwart des Evangeliums) darstellt (vgl. 2Kor 6,2)"²⁶⁴.

The remnant of this νῦν καιρός is qualified by κατ'ἐκλογὴν χάριτος γέγονεν; it has its basis only in the "election of grace". God's merciful and gracious election brought the remnant into being, and this remnant exists of those Jewish-Christians who, similarly to Paul, are elected only by God's grace and mercy. Out of God's mercy Paul became a "called and chosen apostle", and because of God's mercy a remnant is elected out of Israel. The remnant has been brought about by God's gracious election.

In Rom 9,27 Paul also spoke about a 'remnant' which will be saved, but it was only a remnant, not more. The tone of disappointment and warning was discernible.

But here it seems as if the tone has changed: there is a tone of confidence because the apostle has experienced the fact that God did not cast off His people, and this experience leads him to the conviction that God has - already! - preserved a remnant²⁶⁵. This remnant, however, is based solely on "the election of grace" which recalls Rom 9,11: ἵνα ἡ κατ' ἐκλογὴν πρόθεσις τοῦ θεοῦ μένῃ. In both texts God's election, ἐκλογὴ, is creative and acts in a definite way. It comes always as an act of God's freedom. This freedom, though, is always tied to His grace, and vice versa. Grace can only be grace when it is freely given²⁶⁶.

v6 puts this freedom and independence of God's grace in an expression that sounds like a proverb:

εἰ δὲ χάριτι, οὐκέτι ἐξ ἔργων
ἐπεὶ ἡ χάρις, οὐκέτι γίνεται χάρις.

This 'proverbial expression' sums up Paul's preceding argument, and it declares in a compressed way that election is merely based on God's grace and mercy. Human works are of no help! The antithesis χάρις - ἔργον is similar to another antithesis central to Paul's theology. It reminds us of the antithesis δικαιοσύνη ἐκ πίστεως - δικαιοσύνη ἐξ ἔργων.

²⁶⁴Schlier, Römer, p.323; similarly: Wilckens, RömerII, p.237; Althaus, Römer, p.113; Schmidt, Römer, p.186.

²⁶⁵Cf. Kuss, RömerIII, p.798

²⁶⁶Cf. Michel, Römer, p.340: "Gottes Erwählung ist ein Akt seiner Freiheit, aber auch diese Freiheit steht im Zeichen seiner Gnade, wie umgekehrt Gottes Gnade nur als eine freie geschildert werden kann".

This antithesis is already known from 9,30-33, and even from the very beginning when Paul presented his understanding of the εὐαγγέλιον (cf. 1,16f; 3,20f).

Therefore, Paul puts the question of Israel's destiny in the same context, and he uses the same patterns as in his explanation of his gospel. "Works" were and are useless for bringing forth man's salvation, and in the same way they are absolutely useless for fostering the election by God. It is always God's free grace which He grants on the remnant, and therefore on Israel²⁶⁷.

- v7 The question τί οὖν; indicates that the apostle draws an interim conclusion which summarizes the whole discussion about Israel's destiny, which he began in 9,6ff. Besides this it is also the heading for the following scriptural arguments and anticipates their contents.

The verse is structured in a chiasical and antithetical 'parallelismus membrorum':

7a τί οὖν;

7b ὁ ἐπιζητεῖ Ἰσραήλ,

7c τοῦτο οὐκ ἐπέτυχεν,

7d ἡ δὲ ἐκλογή ἐπέτυχεν,

7e οἱ δὲ λοιποὶ ἐπωρώθησαν.

We can elucidate this structure if we slightly alter the punctuation of N.A.²⁶: instead of a colon we put a comma at the end of v7d, and we put this colon at the end of v7e.

The chiasm is formed in v7c.d by οὐκ ἐπέτυχεν ... ἐπέτυχεν, and in v7b.e by Ἰσραήλ ... οἱ δὲ λοιποί. The antithesis is always restricted to the two phrases following each other, i.e. v7b.c and v7d.e. On these grounds it seems to be justified when we alter the punctuation: the structure proves the punctuation, and vice versa.

Furthermore the context seems to demand such a structure because v7 links the argumentation of 11,1-6 with 11,8-10.

But what does this verse say? Paul still bears in mind his word of 10,3f where he spoke about the δικαιοσύνη τοῦ θεοῦ which the Jews did not submit themselves to because they were ἄγνοοῦντες ... τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ δικαιοσύνην, and were "seeking to establish their own righteousness" (v3;RSV). This is the background to our verse.

- v7b.c says that Israel strives for her own righteousness which consists in obeying her Torah.

But as long as Israel regards the Torah as her way of salvation and as a possibility of obtaining God's righteousness by keeping and doing the law, all her striving will be in vain.

²⁶⁷Cf. Barth, KDII₂, p.299

Israel is striving for righteousness, and yet, she will never obtain her own righteousness - ἐπιζητέω (present tense) and ἐπέτυχεν (aorist!) - this is the bitter fact of Israel's reality at the present. Ἰσραήλ is here '... every Israelite, every Jew'²⁶⁸.

v7d.e is the other parallelism. In its first phrase Paul uses the same verb as in 7c, ἐπιτυγχάνω.

In 7c he used it to express a negative effect, now he uses it to express the positive result of God's action. The usage of ἐκλογή is striking: in 11,5 he used it as a description of 'God's electing action', whereas now he uses it as a description of the remnant itself which He, God, has kept for Himself.

So, ἐκλογή has become an 'abstractum pro concreto'. It is only the chosen remnant who obtained God's righteousness. Undoubtedly, Paul refers this first of all to the Christian-Jews, but it can also be referred to the Gentile-Christians because they belong to God's chosen people on the same basis as the Jewish-Christians do.

v7e Equally important is this link. The "others", the "rest", οἱ λοιποί - i.e. the non-Chosen - those who do not believe in Christ have been "petrified", ἐπωρώθησαν, which is a 'passivum divinum'²⁶⁹.

Because of this 'hardening' or 'petrifying' the light of God's election is accompanied by a shadow and darkness. But it is God's hardening, and so it is no longer possible to speak of Israel's guilt. It is God's hardening and He hardens because - as we have seen in 9,14-23 - He is the CREATOR of His people. He elects a remnant only by grace.

v8 God gave to the others, καθὼς γέγραπται, "as the scriptures say", "a spirit of stupor".

This scriptural argument is basically taken from LXX Deut 29,3, and the expression πνεῦμα κατανύξεως (LXX Is 29,10) is inserted into this text.

The πνεῦμα κατανύξεως - רוח תרדמה in Hebrew - "deep sleep", is always sent by God, and can either describe God's way of talking to man in a positive and negative way (cf. Gen 2,21; 15,12; Prov 19,15; Job 4,13; 33,15), or it describes a Divine judgement (cf. 1Sam 26,12; Is 29,10). The context clearly shows that πνεῦμα κατανύξεως is meant as a Divine judgement.

This judgement, however, is absolutely terrible and dreadful because God made the "rest" completely unconscious and senseless: they have eyes, and cannot see; they have ears, and cannot hear.

²⁶⁸Cf. Kuss, RömerIII, p.789; Althaus, Römer, p.113

²⁶⁹Cf. Cranfield, RomansII, p.549; Wilckens, RömerII, p.238

The "spirit of stupor" completes this awful situation because it is now impossible for these people, for οἱ λοιποί, to recognize, or to realize the seriousness of their situation. God isolated them totally from His words, and the 'spirit of stunning' deadens every awareness of their isolated situation. Being in such a situation is an absolutely harsh judgement, and it lasts "until this very day". With the scriptural argument of v8 but also v9f Paul stresses the seriousness of the catastrophe that has come upon Israel. And yet, it seems as if he does not dare to put it in his own words what this situation means for Israel. He takes some scriptural arguments to tell 'Israel' how serious her situation is.

5.33 An Interim-Conclusion

As some sort of conclusion we may say that with the beginning of Rom 11 Paul takes up again the starting-point of his argumentation when he said that "not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel" (9,6;RSV). Obviously Paul always kept in mind this 'working-hypothesis' and his starting-point: namely to differentiate between "Israel" and "Israel".

This differentiation has now been put in concrete terms: it is on the one hand "Israel" which is still regarding her Torah as the way of salvation. She still wants to become justified "by works" (v6f). On the other hand, there is "Israel" as a remnant κατ' ἐκλογὴν χάριτος, and this "Israel" is absolutely dependent on God's grace and mercy. God is, again, the One who creates, who chooses and elects and keeps for Himself the remnant. However, the election is once more described as a merciful one, and mercy is opposed to the 'works' which are done by man to bring forth his own righteousness and justification (v6).

By 'grace alone': this basis of existence is often regarded as a very shaky and unsure one because there is nothing man can contribute to it, but this basis is at the same time a very firm one because God's will and election. His mercy and love are its foundation.

Though, this paradox is the only real and unshakable ground on which the "Israel" κατ' ἐκλογὴν χάριτος can exist. This must be Israel's certainty: GOD elects by His grace His people; but an "Israel" which trusts in human activities such as to obey and to fulfil the Torah, and to find security in these actions, is the "Israel" which faces God's judgement as it is described in vv8-10.

It is - in this case - an interesting fact that Paul does not portray this judgement in his own words but that he takes texts from the scriptures which he uses to illustrate this Divine judgement.

Finally, Paul does not stop at this point: he carries on his argument in the next verses, and he further develops the idea that God elects and hardens. The words of 11,1-10 are not Paul's last words but temporary ones²⁷⁰.

5.4 ROMANS 11,28-32

5.40 The Context

God has set up a clear distinction in Israel between "Israel" and "Israel". He divided her into a "select remnant", and into "the others". This is a matter of fact, and the basis for Paul's further train of thought.

Israel did not "stumble so as to fall" but "through their trespass salvation has come to the Gentiles so as to make Israel jealous" (v11;RSV). Paul is completely convinced that Israel will be saved, and that she will come to the right knowledge of God (v12.15). In 11,16 Paul introduces, in a way similarly to 9,21-24, a new pictorial and vivid comparison.

The first pictures the "first fruits" of a dough, and the whole "lump". The second one pictures a plant which has one single root and several branches. The 'tertium comparationis' of these two parables is, that - 'pars pro toto' - everything is holy when ῥίζα and ἀπαρχή are holy.

In particular the second metaphor serves in v17-24 as the background for Paul's explanation of how it happened that former pagans came to faith, and the elected Jews did not, but remained unbelievers as far as Paul's gospel was concerned. Paul compares the Jews with the branches of this holy olive tree which were broken off. The Gentiles are the wild olive shoots which "were grafted in their place to share the richness of the olive tree" (v17;RSV). These implanted wild olive shoots, however, are still totally dependent on their holy root. All in all, it is again God's activity that breaks off the branches from the holy and good root, and grafts in the wild olive branches.

The purpose of this is mentioned in v22: "Note then the kindness and severity of God: severity toward those who have fallen, but God's kindness to you, provided you continue in his kindness; otherwise you too will be cut off" (RSV).

²⁷⁰ These texts do also say "... was Gott dort deutlich macht, wo er nicht verstockt, sondern erleuchtet, wo er sich nicht verbirgt, sondern zu erkennen gibt. Sie sagen es also alle so, daß der Ernst des Verstockens sichtbar gemacht, aber auch die Vorläufigkeit dieser Maßnahme Gottes nicht geleugnet wird. Das letzte Wort auch über die Verstockten ist damit, daß die Weissagung sie als solche bezeichnet, noch nicht gesprochen. So kann Paulus, indem er diese Weissagung zu Worte kommen läßt, ein letztes Wort über die verstockten Übrigen noch nicht gesagt haben" (Barth, KDII₂, p.306).

Paul continues his argument by saying that there is a possibility of restoration for those branches which were broken off (v23f).

This leads him up to the divulgence of a mystery in v25:

οὐ γὰρ θέλω ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν, ἀδελφοί, τὸ μυστήριον τοῦτο marks its beginning, and this phrase contains a tone of urgency, as if he wants to say: 'I must let you know this mystery, namely that πᾶς Ἰσραὴλ σωθήσεται (v26).

This exciting mystery is immediately substantiated with two scriptural arguments which are taken from Prophetic texts (v26b.27).

Here, the apostle has said definitely his last word concerning Israel.

In v28-32 he draws the final conclusion for Rom 9-11. He sums up the result of his long argument.

5.41 The Text

Paul begins this summary with two antitheses²⁷¹, and says:

11,28 "As far as the gospel is concerned they are enemies,
for your sake,

but as far as the election is concerned they are beloved,
for their fathers' sake;

11,29 for the gifts and the call of God are irrevocable.

11,30 Just as you were once disobedient to God,
but now received mercy by their
disobedience,

11,31 so these were now disobedient because of the mercy shown to
you,

in order that they now will be shown mercy.

11,32 For God has imprisoned all men in disobedience,
in order that he may show his mercy upon all."

5.42 The Exegesis

v28f are the end of Paul's whole argumentation. They summarize what has been said in Rom 11, and draw a final conclusion.

Moreover, they are also the introduction to the final statement in v32. The structure of v28.29 is that of an antithetical 'parallelismus membrorum': μέν - δέ²⁷². Paul describes the situation of the Jews in a sharp and pointed antithesis.

²⁷¹Siebert, Argumentation, p.173: "Wie könnte er es anders als in Antithesen!"

²⁷²Cf. Luther, Lectures, p.431f; Käsemann, Römer, p.305; Michel, Römer, p.357; Wilckens, RömerII, p.257

"As far as the gospel is concerned they are enemies/ hated for your sake", is the first part of it. It is questionable whether εὐαγγέλιον can be interpreted as the "... process of the gospel in the world"²⁷³ because this would be something of a unique Pauline usage and understanding.

Rather, Paul thinks, in mentioning εὐαγγέλιον of his definition in 1,16f, and in the prescript 1,3f. There he defined his εὐαγγέλιον, and this was refused and opposed by the Jews, and made them "enemies", ἐχθροί (active understanding!), towards it. The Jews actively opposed the gospel.

But in their unbelief which was "... their chief crime"²⁷⁴, they caused God's hardening. They were put under God's wrath. As far as this is concerned, we can say that ἐχθροί can also be understood in the passive sense of "being hated".

This interpretation is supported by ἀγαπητοί in the parallel second line²⁷⁵. This Divine hatred, however, has got a certain purpose. Δι' ὑμᾶς points out that this hardening, this present situation of the Jewish people happened with the purpose of saving the Gentiles, of bringing the gospel of mankind's salvation to the Gentiles. Therefore the Jews became 'hated people' κατὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιον.

The second line of this antithesis describes another Jewish reality: κατὰ δὲ τὴν ἐκλογὴν ἀγαπητοί διὰ τοὺς πατέρας. Although we have to recognize that single parts of this parallelism are no real parallels, e.g. the differences in the first and second phrase - διὰ c.acc.²⁷⁶ -, there is no doubt about the fact that these phrases are carefully formulated, and this is so not merely stylistically, but also as regards contents because "... der Neue (wird) gegen den Alten Bund abgesetzt, wobei paradoxerweise der Neue Bund sich aus dem Kreise der früher Erwählten Feinde schafft"²⁷⁷.

The other side is that for him Israel's "election", ἐκλογή, is God's first word to Israel, and this first word remains permanently in force. Her "election" continues (9,11b), and by this "election" they are "beloved people". Yet, this is founded solely on the fact that God loved their fathers, and justified them 'sola fide' (cf. Abraham, Rom 4,13.3).

²⁷³Contra Cranfield, RomansII, p.579

²⁷⁴Calvin, Romans, p.440

²⁷⁵Cf. Wilckens, RömerII, p.257 n.1160; Käsemann, Römer, p.305: "Das antithetische ἀγαπητοί spricht für den zweiten Sinn, ohne den ersten auszu-schließen".

Contra Schmidt, Römer, p.201: "... nur eine rhetorische Wortparallele".

²⁷⁶Wilckens, RömerII, p.258: "... die erste Wendung hat finalen, die zweite kausalen Sinn". Similarly: Kuss, RömerIII, p.816

²⁷⁷Siebert, Argumentation, p.174

In the same way that their fathers have been loved by God, all the other Jews are called "beloved people", ἀγαπητοί.

Ἀγαπητοί reminds us of the description of the Christians in e.g. Rom 1,7: ἀγαπητοί θεοῦ. Paul honours the Jews with the same 'title' as he does the Christians. Moreover, "beloved" is in fact Paul's final word about the Jewish people, and "... das ist also auch hinsichtlich der Gegenwart der ungläubigen Juden das letzte Wort: sie sind Geliebte Gottes, nicht um ihres Seins und Tuns willen - - wohl aber um der Treue Gottes willen, der immer zuerst liebt, der auch da liebt, wo er nicht wieder geliebt wird, der sich in seinem Sohn gerade für seine Feinde dahingegeben hat"²⁷⁸.

This statement necessitates a further 'substantiation' which is given immediately: ἀμεταμέλητα γὰρ τὰ χαρίσματα καὶ ἡ κλῆσις τοῦ θεοῦ. God's bestowed favours and His call are irrevocable. He will not alter His decisions which He has taken. Τὰ χαρίσματα hints at the characteristics which we found in Rom 9,4f, and which had not failed at all (9,6). These characteristics, however, belong to Israel, and define her as set before all the other nations, but the most important gift is GOD'S CALLING. This calling has created Israel, has brought her into being. This CALLING is ISRAEL'S BASIS of EXISTENCE, and through this calling Israel stands "... in a special relation to himself"²⁷⁹.

Both of these features - the gifts, the bestowed favours as well as the calling - are irrevocable, and they remain as they are. This fact is stressed in particular by placing ἀμεταμέλητος right at the beginning of this sentence²⁸⁰.

Finally, we resume Israel's situation as follows:

She is characterized and qualified by a paradox: on the one hand the Israelites are God's hated - because they are "enemies" - with the purpose of bringing the gospel of salvation to the Gentiles; and on the other hand they are God's beloved because of their forefathers. This "because" depends upon the irrevocability of God's calling and His gifts.

v30f give the impression that Paul was not yet satisfied with his argument in v28f, as though he was still lacking some proper basis for what he had said in these verses.

So he explains the antithesis of v28 immediately - γάρ - by looking back upon God's history with the Gentiles (v30), and with regard to the future of Israel. The key-words of these verses are ἀπειθεῖω, which refers to the behaviour of man, and ἐλεέω which applies to God.

²⁷⁸Barth, KDII₂, p.333

²⁷⁹Cranfield, RomansII, p.581

²⁸⁰Cf. Cranfield, RomansII, p.582

These verbs characterize the structure of this text which has been described as a "... rich analogy"²⁸¹. The two datives - τῇ ἀπειθείᾳ and τῷ ἐλέει - are both a 'dativus commodi'²⁸², and form a chiasm:

νῦν δὲ ἡλεήθητε τῇ τούτων ἀπειθείᾳ

νῦν ἡπεύθησαν τῷ ὑμετέρῳ ἐλέει.

The correlative conjunctions ὥστε ... οὕτως are the introductory framework.

Paul looks back on the former status of the Gentiles: they were disobedient because they did not believe in God, they were "contrary people" (Rom 10,21), but they had experienced a transformation by God's mercy - ἡλεήθητε, a 'passivum divinum' - due to the disobedience to the Jews. The roles changed: the Gentiles became the selected people, and the Jews were those who opposed to God's mercy.

This is expressed in v31 which repeats what happened by God's mercy. Now the Jews, οἱ τοῖ, were disobedient. They became the "contrary people" because of the mercy shown to the Gentiles.

The 'dativus commodi' of τῷ ὑμετέρῳ ἐλέει may be translated as: "so also these now have been disobedient in the interest of the mercy shown to you"²⁸³. Thus we see that the appositions τῇ τούτων ἀπειθείᾳ (v30b) and τῷ ὑμετέρῳ ἐλέει correspond perfectly to δι' ὑμᾶς in v28a.

God's mercy which He granted to the Gentiles made the Jews disobedient, but finally - "Now!"²⁸⁴ - also the Jews will come under God's mercy.

If we closely examine these verses, and their close inner relationship and connections, we are forced to conclude that human disobedience and Divine mercy are in a strong antithetical relation, and that every instance of salvation, every instance of coming to faith, is exclusively dependent on God's mercy.

²⁸¹Cf. Siegert, Argumentation, p.174

Contra Cranfield's (RomansII, p.582-5) structural analysis.

²⁸²Käsemann, Römer, p.306; Siegert, Argumentation, p.174; BDR § 188

²⁸³Cranfield, RomansII, p.583

²⁸⁴The νῦν in ἵνα καὶ αὐτοὶ (νῦν) ἐλεθῶσιν is disputed on text-critical grounds:

Some mss read αὐτοὶ ὕστερον ἐλεθῶσιν - cf. 33.365.pc sa -;

other mss read αὐτοὶ (...) ἐλεθῶσιν - cf. P⁴⁶.A.D².F.G.Ψ.Π.latt.sy -; and

the third reading αὐτοὶ νῦν ἐλεθῶσιν is found in N.B.D^x.1506.pc.bo.

The third possibility is in our context the 'lectio difficilior', and it also corresponds to Paul's eschatological expectation that Christ's Parousia would occur within a very short time (cf. Barrett, Romans, p.226/7; Käsemann, Römer, p.306; Michel, Römer, p.358), and that "... it is all the eschatological now" (Cranfield, RomansII, p.586; similarly: Schlier, Römer, p.343f).

v32 summarizes this in a very compact way: "for God has imprisoned them all in disobedience, in order that he may show his mercy to everyone".

This is Paul's final statement at the end of the whole discussion in Rom 9-11, if not indeed of Rom 1,18-11,36.

While we were following Paul's argumentation during the last three chapters, we discovered hard and harsh statements, relating e.g. to man's election and rejection as God's activities.

We have considered the questions of whether God has rejected His people Israel (11,1), and whether God's word has failed (9,6). But in the end Paul draws the conclusion "that he (God) will show his mercy to everyone". Before this could happen, God, who is the author of all human disobedience, imprisoned - συνέχλεισεν - mankind in disobedience with the purpose of showing His mercy to everyone.

However, there remains the question of how to understand τοὺς πάντας ἐλεήσει: Did Paul develop his argumentation within these three chapters from a 'praedestinatio gemina' to an ἀποκατάστασις πάντων? Did he forget the statements he had already made?

It seems to be utterly wrong to understand πάντας in a numerical sense so that every single individual will be saved. "Paul does not intend to make a definite pronouncement about the ultimate destiny of each individual man"²⁸⁵. Moreover, we have to see his statement in the context of his whole letter: 1,16f; 3,21ff; 5,1ff etc. are the keys to the understanding as well as to the interpretation of this text.

"All Israel will be saved", and God will "have mercy upon all": this becomes only a reality when GOD brings mankind - be it Israel, or be it the Gentiles - to faith in Christ Jesus as their salvation.

GOD ALONE will reveal this mercy to 'all Israel' as He reveals Himself to the Gentiles through the mission and ministry of Paul. There is a sure and definite hope for Israel because GOD is a merciful God.

Appropriately, Paul brings the whole discussion to an end by giving 'soli Deo gloriam' (v33-36; cf. Rom 8,31-39).

²⁸⁵Barrett, Romans, p.227

5.5 A FULLER CONCLUSION on ROMANS 9-11

5.50 During the course of the preceding argumentations we were following Paul in his discussion on the problem of the "unbelieving Israel".

Although Rom 9-11 can be regarded as an integral unity, they do not interrupt Paul's argumentation in Romans. Rather, this discussion has become necessary, or even inevitable because right from the beginning of his letter Paul was discussing the effect of his gospel on both groups: on the Jews as well as on the Greeks.

Already in 1,16f - which is commonly regarded as the "theme" of Paul's letter to the Romans - he started this reflection. This text defined his preaching of the gospel as the authentic one. In 1,16f he sums up what is the contents of his gospel. It is first of all a δύναμις θεοῦ εἰς σωτηρίαν παντὶ τῷ πιστεύοντι.

Paul always bore in mind this theme. Beginning with 1,18-3,20 he developed the argument of the forlornness of both groups: of Jews and Greek! He emphasized that God's wrath "is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of men who by their wickedness suppress the truth" (1,18;RSV). No one has an excuse whoever he is (cf. 2,1); and even the Jews are "not at all" "better off" (cf. 3,9). Everyone is a sinner when he is confronted with God's righteousness 286.

In 3,21-4,25 Paul unfolds the positive aspect of God's wrath and His righteousness which "has been manifested apart from law, although the law and prophets bear witness to it, the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction; since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, they are justified by his grace as a gift, ..." (3,21-24a;RSV). This is Paul's gospel 'in nuce', but by meditating the results and the successes of his missionary-labour he had to realize the lack of success of his authentic and Divine gospel amongst the "people of God", the Jews.

As a consequence of this, questions like the one whether "God's word had failed" (9,6), or whether "God has rejected his people" (11,1) arose.

These questions beset Paul, and brought him in conflict: on the one hand he is absolutely convinced that he is proclaiming God's power for salvation "to the Jews first" (1,16); but on the other hand this power did not succeed with the Jews.

In Rom 9-11 he was trying to answer this urgent and pressing problem.

²⁸⁶Cf. Dinkler, Prädestination, p.242f; and the commentaries which are listed in the bibliography.

5.51 GOD is the CREATOR

The first part of his answer is presented in 9,6-29 where Paul argues theo-logically. He responds to the reproach that God is no longer God, and that "God's word had failed" (9,6), from God's point of view.

He protests against these accusations and opinions in the strongest possible way, and he clearly brings out and lays great stress on the fact that GOD is the CREATOR, and that He is still the Creator.

God - who is faithful to His word and promises - has still the freedom to elect His people, and by doing this to bring into being His will²⁸⁷. This, however, is not subject to a philosophical and sophisticated speculation, but Paul gained this insight by the study of Israel's history. This history taught him God's election, His predestination, God's hate and love, and that He creates in His mercy His people.

Therefore, what Paul is doing in this first argumentation, is that he pictures God as BEING GOD. GOD is the GOD of HISTORY, of this world and time. HE is the FREE, independent and SOVEREIGN LORD²⁸⁸.

This is Paul's first argument, and here he can even hold and present a 'praedestinatio gemina'.

5.52 DISOBEDIENCE is ISRAEL's GUILT

This is his second line of argumentation. While Paul was arguing theo-logically in 9,6-29, he is now arguing anthro-po-logically in 10,1-21. This discussion became necessary because the preceding argumentation only answered the question whether God is no longer faithful. Paul responded to this question with the affirmation that God is still faithful but that He is also free to elect whom He wills.

The question, however, of 9,6 whether "God's word had failed" is still present, and it became even more burning by now. Israel does not believe in Jesus as the Messiah while God's own and creating word made the non-Jews into God's Beloved (9,25f). Paul is urged to fight on two sides: to defend GOD's BEING GOD, and to affirm that Israel is still God's elect people.

²⁸⁷Cf. Luz, *Geschichtsverständnis*, p.25: "... daß es in R.9-11 primär um die Frage nach Gott, seiner Treue zu dem in die Geschichte gegebenen Wort gehe".

²⁸⁸Cf. Luz, *Geschichtsverständnis*, pp.29.83f; and Müller, *Gottes Gerechtigkeit*, pp.31-33 passim, e.g.: "Paulus geht es hier keinesfalls um die Vorstellung vom unparteiisch abwägenden Richter, sondern um Gottes eigenes Recht" (p.31).

Therefore, he now asserts that Israel has still a living interest in a relationship with God: she tries to fulfil and to keep the law by works. This has become her stumbling-stone. As far as the fulfilment of the law by works is concerned, "Israel has not succeeded", she did not even realize "that Christ is the end of the law" (10,4). This is incomprehensible to Paul because everything takes place that can bring this fact to light (10,14ff).

So Paul draws the only possible conclusion: Israel did not obey and believe God's proclamation of a new righteousness.

Disobedience is Israel's guilt (cf. 10,21), and so Israel herself is responsible for her present situation²⁸⁹.

But, and this objection can be raised: with these two lines of argument - the theo-logical one, and the anthropo-logical one - Paul has not yet refuted the counter-argument of 9,6. He 'simply' described the 'status quo'. He has not yet answered the urgent problem of the "unbelieving Israel", and he is still wrestling with it.

5.53 ALL ISRAEL will BE SAVED

The question in 11,1 is the logical consequence of the preceding argument, and it opens the last train of argument on this problem.

- 5.53.1 "God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew" (11,2) is his first answer.

On this basis he develops his thought of a "holy remnant" - an idea which was vital in Israel at this time. The Old-Testament story of Elijah - 1Kings 19 - serves as its background. This is the first sign of hope.

- 5.53.2 The second answer is included in the warning towards the Gentiles.

Paul uses the metaphor of an olive-tree whose cultivated branches were broken off for the benefit of wild "olive-shoots" which were grafted into this cultivated and rich olive-tree.

Paul warns the Gentiles not to become arrogant because the "implantation" is an action of God's grace, and God is also able to implant again those branches which He broke off.

- 5.53.3 The third answer is that Israel's present situation is only of temporal restriction.

²⁸⁹Whether this chapter opens a discussion to a modern understanding of "free human choice", or the "freedom of the will of man" is debatable. I tend to deny this possibility. Although it is necessary to realize that someone can be disobedient to God, yet disobedience is not always a matter of a freely calculating and weighing decision! Another aspect is mentioned by Barrett, *Essays*, p.136: "God's choice is by definition prior to man's decision, whatever the logical relation between them may be. Whether there can be a logical reconciliation between the two freedoms, God's and man's, is a question to which Paul does not address himself; ..."

When the "full number of the Gentiles come in", "all Israel will be saved" (11,25f). This answer is a definite sign of hope, and expresses Paul's utter conviction.

However, one reservation must necessarily be made:

It is God Alone who 'sola gratia' keeps a 'Holy Remnant', and Who works in His people - at every point of time - as Israel's Creator ²⁹⁰.

5.54 A Summary

This is Paul's answer to this problem. He wrestled with it by going the way from a 'praedestinatio gemina' to the personal conviction that "all Israel will be saved". But always he bears in mind that God is the One who saves His people by His electing and predestinating work in merciful freedom.

This God, however, is the One who offered the redemption to all mankind in His Son Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ will bring to completion the salvation of Israel when he, in his second coming, will encounter Israel, as He encountered Paul on the Damascus-road. So Paul uses the idea of "election - predestination" just to paraphrase that God is sovereign and free as Israel's Creator, and that He can act with His creation as He wills.

The Sitz-im-Leben of this argumentation was obvious and self-evident in Paul's biography. It functioned for this active Jewish missionary as a consolation that - even if he had no success with his gospel in Israel - it is God's work, God's merciful care and turning to Israel which will bring Israel to faith and salvation.

So, finally all these statements on "predestination - election" served to comfort and to soothe Paul's distress about his still unbelieving fellow-Jews by trusting in God's activity and in His being the Creator. Such a comfort and trust freed him for his further work amongst the Gentiles (cf. Phil 3,12-14).

These final thoughts were an interpretation which belong exclusively to Paul's biography.

²⁹⁰Cf. Müller, Gottes Gerechtigkeit, p.46: "... Rettung Gesamtisraels wird als iustificatio impii zur Demonstration des sola gratia"; and pp.80-93 passim, e.g. p.92: "Stattdessen arbeitet er durch seine dialektische Unterscheidung des natürlichen und eschatologischen Israel zweierlei heraus: (1) Gott ist unbedingter Herr und ständiger Schöpfer seines Volkes, der sich durch die Ansprüche natürlicher Abstammung nicht binden läßt. (2) Das natürliche Israel bleibt von der Verheißung beansprucht".



But we - the Christians, and Christian theologians of today - are also asked whether we can make such an opinion fruitful for our work, and for our times?

- Are we in a similar situation as Paul was?
- Are we in such a pressing conflict?

Is it allowed - this may be another question - to develop on the basis of these texts an abstract "doctrine of election and predestination"? How can we hold such a teaching in the present?

In the end we have got questions upon questions, and we will attempt to answer some of them in our final chapter.

6. Final Remarks on the Idea of "Predestination" and "Election" in Pauline Thought

6.0 What Paul did not do!

In our thesis which is entitled "The Ideas of Predestination and Election in Pauline Thought", we have dealt with many texts for exegetical reasons.

But nowhere did Paul develop an explicit 'doctrine of predestination or election' on *philosophical grounds*. Nowhere in these texts did the terminology of "election" and "predestination" serve for working out an abstract concept of God.

And even in Rom 9-11 he did not postulate an abstract and free will of God, and as a consequence of this a "doctrine of predestination - election".

Therefore, it is also impossible to us to refer to Paul as our source when we start to develop a "doctrine of Predestination, or Election" on philosophical grounds. When we regard Paul as our 'theological companion', and if we want to walk at his side, it seems not advisable to us, to establish such a doctrine.

6.1 What Paul did do!

The fact that Paul did not carry out such an impossible undertaking has got several reasons:

6.11 The Theo-logical Reason

As he described it 'expressis verbis' in Rom 9,19-29, God is the CREATOR of Israel, and if of Israel, then God is also the Creator of every Christian.

This knowledge of God - GOD BEING the CREATOR - is not philosophically based but is a matter of Paul's religious experience and knowledge as a Jew. Here, Paul's background as a Jewish theologian gets a look-in.

As a Jew, Paul knew God as the One who created this world, and also as the One who elected and called Israel into being as His chosen people. God is the One who transformed Israel into a special people. ISRAEL was and still is GOD's OWN CREATION. So God is the One who was always the primary active partner in the relationship with Israel. His action was always prior to Israel's reaction! God acted with 'judgement and grace' in Israel. This belonged to Israel's experience, and therefore it also belonged to Paul's.

But this theo-logical answer also implies another aspect: Because God is "the Maker of heaven and earth" (cf. the "Apostolic Creed"), He has also the right to demand the people's devotion and service. He is able to demand that His creation follows His words and serves Him.

This claim is not an arbitrary and uncontrolled one but it is His right as being the Creator!

Therefore He can call Israel to the obedience to his commandments, and to a life which is in correspondence to His Holiness (cf. The context of Deut 5-7 where we find one 'locus classicus' of Israel's election-theology in Deut 7,6-8!²⁹¹).

This is the first answer: GOD is the CREATOR, and in His being the "Maker of heaven and earth" He created Israel as His chosen people, and He also creates the Christian church with His chosen people.

Paul can even be so bold as to state that "if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation, the old has passed away, behold, the new has come" (2Cor 5,17;RSV).

The WORD is the means by which God is creative: the world (Gen 1,3 etc); Israel (cf. Deut7); and the Church: they are all '*creatura verbi Divini*', they were all brought into being by His Divine word.

6.12 The Christo-logical reason

The quotation from 2Cor 5,17 leads us up to our second answer. This one is strictly Christo-logical.

Paul often emphasized that the Christians were "called in Christ Jesus", the Son of God²⁹².

Jesus Christ is the Mediator of this new creation. Christ is the One who became incarnate, and lived as a man amongst men and brought God's new righteousness, mercy and love to this world.

At this point, Paul came in conflict with his fellow-Jews because he preached this new Divine righteousness as an open and valid possibility to everyone who believes (cf. Rom 1,16f), to Jews and non-Jews, without the observance of the Torah. This evoked the Jewish protest because they did not accept Paul's concept of integrated congregations which consisted of Jews and Greeks.

The former Jewish exclusivity was changed on the one hand into a world-wide possibility to each person who believes, and on the other hand the emphasis on faith excluded everyone who did not believe in "Christ as Our Lord and Saviour". This dialectic personal conviction gave rise to the protest of his opponents amongst his fellow-Jews. They insisted on their privileges as being Jews.

²⁹¹See above: 1.2.2

²⁹²Cf. particularly the "thanksgivings". See above 2.1 and 2.2

Paul rejected the Jewish insisting on their privileges first by demonstrating God's election in Israel's history over and over again, and he even develops a 'praedestinatio gemina' for showing God's FREEDOM and INDEPENDENCE as the Creator who began "in Christ" a new history.

6.13 The Ecclesio-logical Reason

This new history takes place, and this is our third point, "in time and space" in the Christian congregations. The congregations are - as we often saw it in the "proem" and "prescript" - God's called, and also, at the same moment, God's chosen people.

So the third point is an ecclesio-logical one. The Pauline letters are no written documents to a pagan world, and they are also no 'compendium for the Systematic Theology', but they are a product of intense "... contact and communication between author and recipients". In his letters Paul "... seeks to inform, to exhort, to convince and to discipline - in short to perform the same function as he would were he preaching in person"²⁹³.

Both Paul and his recipients know each other; they (seem to) have a close contact, and Paul regards the members of the congregations he founded as "called and chosen people". These congregations form a "new people of God", and therefore he can exhort and discipline but also console them by means of the terminology and the ideas of "election" and "predestination".

All the church-members are active, practising and confessing Christians who have to deal with inward - different socio-cultural backgrounds (cf. the texts from 1Cor 1.2.7) -, and outward - probably difficulties with the political authorities, or even persecutions - problems. Consequently, we found in different contexts like the "exhortation", or the "consolation" as well as in the "proem" the terminology of "election and predestination" (as we showed in our contextual verse-by-verse exegesis).

This third point is our last but - by no means! - least point. It is particularly our starting-point when we react to the question whether it is still possible to hold a "doctrine, or theology of predestination - election" on philosophical grounds.

The way Paul used the terminology and the idea of "election and predestination" in our texts demands first of all an altered Ecclesio-logy.

²⁹³ The last two quotations are from: Moxnes, *Theology in Conflict*, p.32

This renewed Ecclesiology has to consider the results of our investigation.

6.2 Instead of a Conclusion - Some Final Theses

- 6.21 Paul stands in the Old-Testament and Jewish tradition of knowing God as the Creator of His people.

God created - by calling and electing through His word - the people of Israel. God also created - by calling and electing in Christ, His incarnate Word, through the apostolic preaching - the new people of God, the Christian church!

- 6.22 Jesus Christ, however, is the person in which this election takes place. He lived God's reconciliation during his life-time, and he reconciled God and mankind by bearing God's sentence and judgement over mankind when he died on the Cross. The result was, and still is that men shall live as reconciled people "before God".

Jesus Christ is - because he is the Son of God - a holy and righteous person who demands holy and righteous living people when they live "in him".

- 6.23 "In Christ" the Christians were "called and chosen".

This does not mean that there is an "elect church" with non-believing members; or that there is a church which must be divided - by Luther's fatal distinction - into an 'ecclesia visibilis' and an 'ecclesia invisibilis' (which is the "true church"!).

The Christian church consists - according to Paul - of INDIVIDUALS who came to faith, who were then baptized, and confessed their belief, and lived a life worthy of their holy calling!

So, the Christian church consists of those who experienced themselves as "chosen and elect INDIVIDUALS", and because the individuals are sanctified and are made holy by God, the church as the body of Christ, is elect!

This is Pauline Ecclesio-logy: first the individual, then the body - the church -; yet both ideas are intertwined with each other, and should not be torn apart.

The understanding of the church as a "body" without "living members" as well as "individuals" without a "body": this is a contradiction in terms!

This is certainly a very provocative and controversial statement because it puts radically into question the existence and the 'status quo' of many churches of today.

- 6.24 The Christian church is always totally dependent on God's calling, His election and predestination "in Christ".

This event is - because it is an action of the Holy God - binding every Christian to lead a holy life. For that reason Paul can use the terminology of "election and predestination" in the context of an "exhortation".

By using these terms he lays claim on the Christians: Because they are God's Creation they are under the Creator's claim and demand. Therefore: "calling" or "election" do not release man from his obligation. On the contrary: They put him in responsibility.

Responsible and obligatory action and behaviour, of the Christian and of the church, is demanded in all areas of life. This can almost be understood as an obligatory demand for the Christian's life.

But because God called man effectively he can also be certain that GOD will keep him as His elect! God regards the Believer as His "new creation", and therefore He will also protect him (cf. Rom 8,28-30²⁹⁴).

- 6.25 As regards to Rom 9-11 we concluded the interpretation by saying that Paul was wrestling with a besetting question.

When he had finished his argument, he drew the conclusion that God "has consigned all men to disobedience, that he may have mercy upon all" (Rom 11,32;RSV).

This is still a question to me: Are we able to argue that way when we try to find an answer why one person is a Christian, and the other is not?

Would we be able - as Paul was - to leave the conversion of the non-Believers to God's hands, or would we try to pressurize this person?

I believe that to Paul this conviction of a living and active God who creates His people by His Word was indispensable for his missionary-labour. The conviction that everything comes forth only by God's creative Word gave Paul the calmness to do his work, as he described it in Phil 3,14.

Particularly today, we need this calmness very much. We - the Christians, the theologians, the ministers and curates - have to do our work, i.e. to bear witness to God and His Son Jesus Christ.

Then we may pray and hope that the Holy Spirit as the Interpreter of God's Word will mediate our proclamation to the hearts of the people for we know that the Gospel of Christ is a δὲναις θεοῦ to everyone.

²⁹⁴See above: chapter 3.

7. Abbreviations

7.1 Abbreviations (according to Schwertner)

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| AncB | The Anchor Bible |
| BEvThe | Beiträge zur Evangelischen Theologie |
| BHTh | Beiträge zur Historischen Theologie |
| BNTC | Black's New Testament Commentary |
| CeB | The Century Bible |
| CNT(N) | Commentaire du Nouveau Testament. Neuchâtel |
| EKK | Evangelisch-katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament |
| EtB | Etudes bibliques |
| EvTh | Evangelische Theologie |
| Exp.B | The Expositor's Bible |
| FRLANT | Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments |
| HNT | Handbuch zum Neuen Testament |
| HThK | Herders theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament |
| ICC | International Critical Commentary of the Holy Scriptures |
| Kairos | Kairos. Religionswissenschaftliche Untersuchungen |
| KD | Barth, Karl: Die kirchliche Dogmatik |
| KEK | Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament. Begründet von Heinrich A.W. Meyer |
| LThK ² | Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche, 2. Auflage, Freiburg, vol.1 (1957) to vol.10 (1965) |
| MNTC | The Moffat New Testament Commentary |
| NCB | The New Clarendon Bible |
| NCeB | The New Century Bible |
| NEB | New English Bible |
| NIC | The New International Commentary on the New Testament |
| NT. | Novum Testamentum |
| NT.S | Novum Testamentum. Supplements |
| NTD | Das Neue Testament Deutsch |
| NTS | New Testament Studies |
| RGG ³ | Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart, 3. Auflage, Tübingen, vol.1 (1956) to vol.6 (1962) |
| RSR | Recherches de science religieuse |
| SJTh | Scottish Journal of Theology |
| StEv | Studia evangelica |
| TB | Theologische Bücherei |
| TDNT | Theological Dictionary of the New Testament |
| TDOT | Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament |
| ThWAT | Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament |
| ThWNT | Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament |
| ThHK | Theologischer Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament |

| | |
|-------|---|
| TNTC | The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries |
| TRE | Theologische Realenzyklopädie |
| TU | Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur |
| WA | Luther, Martin: Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe (Weimarer Ausgabe) |
| WMANT | Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament |
| WUNT | Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament |
| ZAW | Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft |
| ZB | Zürcher Bibel. Die Heilige Schrift des Alten und Neuen Testaments |
| ZNW | Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft |

7.2 Abbreviations of my own

| | |
|--------|---|
| BDR | Blass-Debrunner-Rehkopf: Grammatik des neutestamentlichen Griechisch |
| HHi | Hartmut Hilke |
| Luther | Die Bibel. Nach der Übersetzung Martin Luthers |
| NIV | Holy Bible. New International Version |
| RSV | Holy Bible. Revised Standard Version |
| Str-Bi | H.L.Strack - P.Billerbeck: Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch. vol.1 (1922) to vol.4 (1928); vol.5 (1955) |

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edidit Kittel, Rudolf
Württembergische Bibelanstalt, Stuttgart, 1937
- 8.12 BHS - Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia
editio funditus renovata (editors: Elliger, Karl and Rudolph, Wilhelm)
Deutsche Bibelstiftung, Stuttgart, 1967/77
- 8.13 LXX - Septuaginta
Id est Vetus Testamentum graece iuxta LXX interpretes
edidit Rahlfs, Alfred
Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, Stuttgart, 1935
- 8.14 N²¹ - Novum Testamentum Graece
cum apparatu critico curavit D.Eberhard Nestle,
novis curis elaboravit D.Erwin Nestle
Stuttgart, 21.1952
- 8.15 N.A.²⁶ - Novum Testamentum Graece (Nestle-Aland)
post Eberhard Nestle et Erwin Nestle
communitur ediderunt Kurt Aland, Matthew Black,
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²⁹⁵In this bibliography I will first mention - in alphabetical order - the abbreviation which I used throughout the thesis at the start of the entry because in my opinion it seems to be more practical and easier to the reader to find the literature I referred to during the argumentation in my thesis. Then I give the full entry with author's name and surname, title, date, and place of publication.

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 16. 1984
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 Collins German-English - English-German Dictionary
 by Terrell, Peter, Calderwood-Schnorr, Veronika; Morris, Wendy; and Breitsprecher, Roland
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- Collins Thesaurus
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 Editor-in-Chief: Procter, Paul
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 Chicago/ London, ² 1979 (from WBauer's ⁵ 1958)
- Koehler - Baumgartner
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 Leiden, 1958
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 Edinburgh, ⁵ 1978
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8.3. SECONDARY LITERATURE

8.31 Commentaries

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